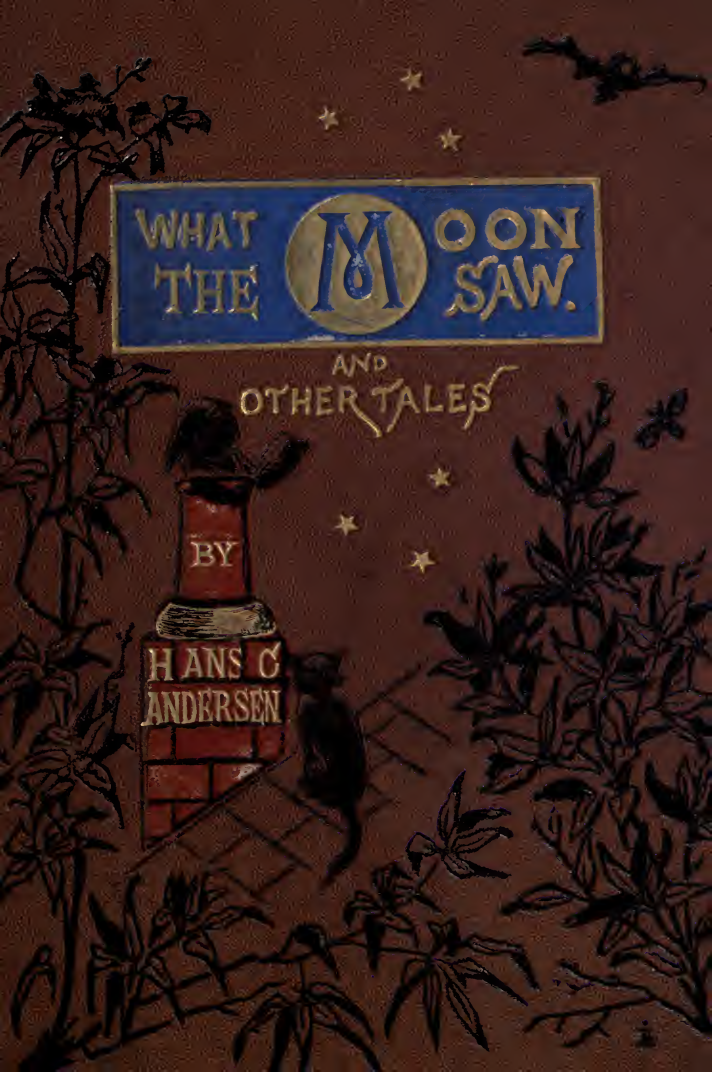
WHAT THE MOON SAW.
AND OTHER TALES
BY
HANS C ANDERSEN

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WHAT THE MOON SAW.

AND OTHER TALES.

BY

HANS C. ANDERSEN.

TRANSLATED BY H. W. DULCKEN, PH.D.

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. W BAYES,
ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

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PREFACE.

The present book is put forth as a sequel to the volume of Hans C. Andersen's "Stories and Tales," published in a similar form in the course of 1864. It contains tales and sketches various in character; and, following as it does an earlier volume, care has been taken to intersperse with the children's tales, stories which, by their graver character and deeper meaning, are calculated to interest those "children of a larger growth" who can find instruction as well as amusement in the play of fancy and imagination, though the realm be that of fiction, and the instruction be conveyed in a simple form.

The series of sketches of "What the Moon Saw," with which the present volume opens, arose from the experiences

of ANDERSEN, when as a youth he went to seek his fortune in the capital of his native land; and the story entitled "Under the Willow Tree" is said likewise to have its foundation in fact; indeed, it seems redolent of the truth of that natural human love and suffering which is so truly said to "make the whole world kin."

On the preparation and embellishment of the book, the same care and attention have been lavished as on the preceding volume. The pencil of Mr. BAYES and the graver of the BROTHERS DALZIEL have again been employed in the work of illustration; and it is hoped that the favour bestowed by the public on the former volume may be extended to this its successor.

H. W. D.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
What the Moon Saw	1
The Story of the Year	40
She was Good for Nothing	48
"There is a Difference"	55
Everything in its right Place	59
The Goblin and the Huckster	66
In a Thousand Years	70
The Bond of Friendship	72
Jack the Dullard. An Old Story told Anew	81
Something	86
Under the Willow Tree	92
The Beetle	107
What the Old Man does is always Right	114
The Wind tells about Waldemar Daa and his Daughters	120
Ib and Christine	130
Ole the Tower-Keeper	142
The Bottle-Neck	151
Good Humour	161
A Leaf from the Sky	165
The Dumb Book	168
The Jewish Girl	171
The Thorny Road of Honour	176
The Old Gravestone	180
The Old Bachelor's Nightcap	184
The Marsh King's Daughter	196
The Last Dream of the Old Oak Tree. A Christmas Tale	238
The Bell-Deep	244
The Puppet Showman	247
The Pigs	251

PAGE
Anne Lisbeth 254
Charming 265
In the Duck-yard 272
The Girl who Trod on the Loaf 277
A Story from the Sand-dunes 285
The Bishop of Börglum and his Warriors 316
The Snow Man 323
Two Maidens 328
The Farmyard Cock and the Weathercock 330
The Pen and Inkstand 332
The Child and the Grave 334
Soup on a Sausage-Peg 339
The Stone of the Wise Men 353
The Butterfly 367
In the Uttermost Parts of the Sea 369
The Phœnix Bird 371
"The Will-o'-the-Wisp is in the Town," says the Moor-Woman . . 372
The Windmill 385
In the Nursery 388
The Golden Treasure 392
The Storm shakes the Shield 401
The Legend of Nürnberg Castle 405
A Night in the Apennines 407
The Carnival in Rome 410
Mahomet's Birthday. A Scene in Constantinople 415
Days in the Mediterranean 422
The Grave-yard at Scutari 427
The Bosphorus 429
Athens 436
The Bird of Popular Song 441
The Toad 444
The Porter's Son 452
Put off is not Done with 470
The Snowdrop 476
Our Aunt 480
The Thistle's Experiences 486
Poultry Meg's Family 490

MY POST OF OBSERVATION.

WHAT THE MOON SAW.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a strange thing, that when I feel most fervently and most deeply, my hands and my tongue seem alike tied, so that I cannot

rightly describe or accurately portray the thoughts that are rising within me; and yet I am a painter: my eye tells me as much as that, and all my friends who have seen my sketches and fancies say the same.

I am a poor lad, and live in one of the narrowest of lanes; but I do not want for light, as my room is high up in the house, with an extensive prospect over the neighbouring roofs. During the first few days I went to live in the town, I felt low-spirited and solitary enough. Instead of the forest and the green hills of former days, I had here only a forest of chimney-pots to look out upon. And then I had not a single friend; not one familiar face greeted me.

So one evening I sat at the window, in a desponding mood; and presently I opened the casement and looked out. Oh, how my heart leaped up with joy! Here was a well-known face at last—a round, friendly countenance, the face of a good friend I had known at home. In, fact it was the MOON that looked in upon me. He was quite unchanged, the dear old Moon, and had the same face exactly that he used to show when he peered down upon me through the willow trees on the moor. I kissed my hand to him over and over again, as he shone far into my little room; and he, for his part, promised me that every evening, when he came abroad, he would look in upon me for a few moments. This promise he has faithfully kept. It is a pity that he can only stay such a short time when he comes. Whenever he appears, he tells me of one thing or another that he has seen on the previous night, or on that same evening. "Just paint the scenes I describe to you"—this is what he said to me—"and you will have a very pretty picture-book." I have followed his injunction for many evenings. I could make up a new "Thousand and One Nights," in my own way, out of these pictures, but the number might be too great, after all. The pictures I have here given have not been chosen at random, but follow in their proper order, just as they were described to me. Some great gifted painter, or some poet or musician, may make something more of them if he likes; what I have given here are only hasty sketches, hurriedly put upon the paper, with some of my own thoughts interspersed; for the Moon did not come to me every evening —a cloud sometimes hid his face from me.

THE INDIAN GIRL.

First Evening.

"Last night"—I am quoting the Moon's own words—"last night I was gliding through the cloudless Indian sky. My face was mirrored in the waters of the Ganges, and my beams strove to pierce through the thick intertwining boughs of the bananas, arching beneath me like the tortoise's shell. Forth from the thicket tripped a Hindoo maid, light as a gazelle, beautiful as Eve. Airy and ethereal as a vision, and yet sharply defined amid the surrounding shadows, stood this daughter of Hindostan: I could read on her delicate brow the thought that had brought her hither. The thorny creeping plants tore her sandals, but for all that she came rapidly forward. The deer that had come down to the river to quench their thirst, sprang by with a startled bound, for in her hand the maiden bore a lighted lamp. I could see the blood in her delicate finger tips, as she spread them for a screen before the dancing flame. She came down to the stream, and set the lamp upon the water, and let it float away. The flame flickered to and fro, and seemed ready to expire; but still the lamp burned on, and the girl's black sparkling eyes, half veiled behind their long silken lashes, followed it with a gaze of earnest intensity. She knew that if the lamp continued to burn so long as she could keep it in sight, her betrothed was still alive; but if the lamp was suddenly extinguished, he

was dead. And the lamp burned bravely on, and she fell on her knees, and prayed. Near her in the grass lay a speckled snake, but she heeded it not—she thought only of Bramah and of her betrothed. 'He lives!' she shouted joyfully, 'he lives!' And from the mountains the echo came back upon her, 'he lives!'"

THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE CHICKENS.

Second Evening.

"Yesterday," said the Moon to me, "I looked down upon a small courtyard surrounded on all sides by houses. In the courtyard sat a clucking hen with eleven chickens; and a pretty little girl was running and jumping around them. The hen was frightened, and screamed, and spread out her wings over the little brood. Then the girl's father came

out and scolded her; and I glided away and thought no more of the matter.

"But this evening, only a few minutes ago, I looked down into the same courtyard. Everything was quiet. But presently the little girl came forth again, crept quietly to the hen-house, pushed back the bolt, and slipped into the apartment of the hen and chickens. They cried out loudly, and came fluttering down from their perches, and ran about in dismay, and the little girl ran after them. I saw it quite plainly, for I looked through a hole in the hen-house wall. I was angry with the wilful child, and felt glad when her father came out and scolded her more violently than yesterday, holding her roughly by the arm: she held down her head, and her blue eyes were full of large tears. 'What are you about here?' he asked. She wept and said, 'I wanted to kiss the hen and beg her pardon for frightening her yesterday; but I was afraid to tell you.'

"And the father kissed the innocent child's forehead, and I kissed her on the mouth and eyes."

Third Evening.

"In the narrow street round the corner yonder—it is so narrow that my beams can only glide for a minute along the walls of the house, but in that minute I see enough to learn what the world is made of—in that narrow street I saw a woman. Sixteen years ago that woman was a child, playing in the garden of the old parsonage, in the country. The hedges of rose-bush were old, and the flowers were faded. They straggled wild over the paths, and the ragged branches grew up among the boughs of the apple trees; here and there were a few roses still in bloom—not so fair as the queen of flowers generally appears, but still they had colour and scent too. The clergyman's little daughter appeared to me a far lovelier rose, as she sat on her stool under the straggling hedge, hugging and caressing her doll with the battered pasteboard cheeks.

"Ten years afterwards I saw her again. I beheld her in a splendid ball-room: she was the beautiful bride of a rich merchant. I rejoiced at her happiness, and sought her on calm quiet evenings—ah, nobody thinks of my clear eye and my silent glance! Alas! my rose ran wild, like the rose bushes in the garden of the parsonage. There are tragedies in every-day life, and to-night I saw the last act of one.

"She was lying in bed in a house in that narrow street: she was sick

unto death, and the cruel landlord came up, and tore away the thin coverlet, her only protection against the cold. 'Get up!' said he; 'your face is enough to frighten one. Get up and dress yourself, give me money, or I'll turn you out into the street! Quick—get up!' She answered, 'Alas! death is gnawing at my heart. Let me rest.' But he forced her to get up and bathe her face, and put a wreath of roses in her hair; and he placed her in a chair at the window, with a candle burning beside her, and went away.

"I looked at her, and she was sitting motionless, with her hands in her lap. The wind caught the open window and shut it with a crash, so that a pane came clattering down in fragments; but still she never moved. The curtain caught fire, and the flames played about her face; and I saw that she was dead. There at the open window sat the dead woman, preaching a sermon against *sin*—my poor faded rose out of the parsonage garden!"

Fourth Evening.

"This evening I saw a German play acted," said the Moon. "It was in a little town. A stable had been turned into a theatre; that is to say, the stable had been left standing, and had been turned into private boxes, and all the timber work had been covered with coloured paper. A little iron chandelier hung beneath the ceiling, and that it might be made to disappear into the ceiling, as it does in great theatres, when the *ting-ting* of the prompter's bell is heard, a great inverted tub had been placed just above it.

"'*Ting-ting!*' and the little iron chandelier suddenly rose at least half a yard and disappeared in the tub; and that was the sign that the play was going to begin. A young nobleman and his lady, who happened to be passing through the little town, were present at the performance, and consequently the house was crowded. But under the chandelier was a vacant space like a little crater: not a single soul sat there, for the tallow was dropping, drip, drip! I saw everything, for it was so warm in there that every loophole had been opened. The male and female servants stood outside, peeping through the chinks, although a real policeman was inside, threatening them with a stick. Close by the orchestra could be seen the noble young couple in two old arm-chairs, which were usually occupied by his worship the mayor and his lady; but these latter were to-day obliged to content themselves with wooden forms, just as if they had been ordinary citizens; and the lady observed

THE PLAY IN A STABLE.

quietly to herself, 'One sees, now, that there is rank above rank;' and this incident gave an air of extra festivity to the whole proceedings. The chandelier gave little leaps, the crowd got their knuckles rapped, and I, the Moon, was present at the performance from beginning to end."

Fifth Evening.

"Yesterday," began the Moon, "I looked down upon the turmoil of Paris. My eye penetrated into an apartment of the Louvre. An old grandmother, poorly clad—she belonged to the working class—was following one of the under-servants into the great empty throne-room, for this was the apartment she wanted to see—that she was resolved to see; it had cost her many a little sacrifice, and many a coaxing word, to penetrate thus far. She folded her thin hands, and looked round with an air of reverence, as if she had been in a church.

"'Here it was!' she said, 'here!' And she approached the throne, from which hung the rich velvet fringed with gold lace. 'There,' she exclaimed, 'there!' and she knelt and kissed the purple carpet. I think she was actually weeping.

"'But it was not *this very* velvet!' observed the footman, and a smile played about his mouth. 'True, but it was this very place,' replied the woman, 'and it must have looked just like this.' 'It looked so, and yet it did not,' observed the man: 'the windows were beaten in, and the doors were off their hinges, and there was blood upon the floor.' 'But for all that you can say, my grandson died upon the throne of France. Died!' mournfully repeated the old woman. I do not think another word was spoken, and they soon quitted the hall. The evening twilight faded, and my light shone doubly vivid upon the rich velvet that covered the throne of France.

"Now, who do you think this poor woman was? Listen, I will tell you a story.

"It happened, in the Revolution of July, on the evening of the most brilliantly victorious day, when every house was a fortress, every window a breastwork. The people stormed the Tuileries. Even women and children were to be found among the combatants. They penetrated into the apartments and halls of the palace. A poor half-grown boy in a ragged blouse fought among the older insurgents. Mortally wounded with several bayonet thrusts, he sank down. This happened in the throne-room. They laid the bleeding youth upon the throne of France, wrapped the velvet around his wounds, and his blood streamed forth upon the imperial purple. There was a picture! the splendid hall, the fighting groups! A torn flag lay upon the ground, the tricolor was waving above the bayonets, and on the throne lay the poor lad with the pale glorified countenance, his eyes turned towards the sky, his limbs writhing in the death agony, his breast bare, and his poor tattered

clothing half hidden by the rich velvet embroidered with silver lilies. At the boy's cradle a prophecy had been spoken: 'He will die on the throne of France!' The mother's heart dreamt of a second Napoleon.

"My beams have kissed the wreath of *immortelles* on his grave, and this night they kissed the forehead of the old grandame, while in a dream the picture floated before her which thou mayest draw — the poor boy on the throne of France."

Sixth Evening.

"I've been in Upsala," said the Moon: "I looked down upon the great plain covered with coarse grass, and upon the barren fields. I mirrored my face in the Tyris river, while the steamboat drove the fish into the rushes. Beneath me floated the waves, throwing long shadows on the so-called graves of Odin, Thor, and Friga. In the scanty turf that covers the hill-side names have been cut.* There is no monument here, no memorial on which the traveller can have his name carved, no rocky wall on whose surface he can get it painted; so visitors have the turf cut away for that purpose. The naked earth peers through in the form of great letters and names; these form a network over the whole hill. Here is an immortality, which lasts till the fresh turf grows!

"Up on the hill stood a man, a poet. He emptied the mead horn with the broad silver rim, and murmured a name. He begged the winds not to betray him, but I heard the name. I knew it. A count's coronet sparkles above it, and therefore he did not speak it out. I smiled, for I knew that a poet's crown adorns his own name. The nobility of Eleanora d'Este is attached to the name of Tasso. And I also know where the Rose of Beauty blooms!"

Thus spake the Moon, and a cloud came between us. May no cloud seperate the poet from the rose!

Seventh Evening.

"Along the margin of the shore stretches a forest of firs and beeches, and fresh and fragrant is this wood; hundreds of nightingales visit it

* Travellers on the Continent have frequent opportunities of seeing how universally this custom prevails among travellers. In some places on the Rhine, pots of paint and brushes are offered by the natives to the traveller desirous of "immortalising" himself.

every spring. Close beside it is the sea, the ever-changing sea, and between the two is placed the broad high-road. One carriage after another rolls over it; but I did not follow them, for my eye loves best to rest upon one point. A Hun's Grave * lies there, and the sloe and blackthorn grow luxuriantly among the stones. Here is true poetry in nature.

"And how do you think men appreciate this poetry? I will tell you what I heard there last evening and during the night.

"First, two rich landed proprietors came driving by. 'Those are glorious trees!' said the first. 'Certainly; there are ten loads of firewood in each,' observed the other: 'it will be a hard winter, and last year we got fourteen dollars a load'—and they were gone. 'The road here is wretched,' observed another man who drove past. 'That 's the fault of those horrible trees,' replied his neighbour; 'there is no free current of air; the wind can only come from the sea'—and they were gone. The stage coach went rattling past. All the passengers were asleep at this beautiful spot. The postillion blew his horn, but he only thought, 'I can play capitally. It sounds well here. I wonder if those in there like it?'—and the stage coach vanished. Then two young fellows came galloping up on horseback. There 's youth and spirit in the blood here! thought I; and, indeed, they looked with a smile at the moss-grown hill and thick forest. 'I should not dislike a walk here with the miller's Christine,' said one—and they flew past.

"The flowers scented the air; every breath of air was hushed: it seemed as if the sea were a part of the sky that stretched above the deep valley. A carriage rolled by. Six people were sitting in it. Four of them were asleep; the fifth was thinking of his new summer coat, which would suit him admirably; the sixth turned to the coachman and asked him if there were anything remarkable connected with yonder heap of stones. 'No,' replied the coachman, 'it 's only a heap of stones; but the trees are remarkable.' 'How so?' 'Why, I 'll tell you how they are very remarkable. You see, in winter, when the snow lies very deep, and has hidden the whole road so that nothing is to be seen, those trees serve me for a landmark. I steer by them, so as not to drive into the sea; and you see that is why the trees are remarkable.'

"Now came a painter. He spoke not a word, but his eyes sparkled. He began to whistle. At this the nightingales sang louder than ever. 'Hold your tongues!' he cried testily; and he made accurate notes of

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* Large mounds similar to the "barrows" found in Britain, are thus designated in Germany and the North

all the colours and transitions—blue, and lilac, and dark brown. 'That will make a beautiful picture,' he said. He took it in just as a mirror takes in a view; and as he worked he whistled a march of Rossini. And last of all came a poor girl. She laid aside the burden she carried, and sat down to rest upon the Hun's Grave. Her pale handsome face

THE POOR GIRL RESTS ON THE HUN'S GRAVE.

was bent in a listening attitude towards the forest. Her eyes brightened, she gazed earnestly at the sea and the sky, her hands were folded, and I think she prayed, 'Our Father.' She herself could not understand the feeling that swept through her, but I know that this minute, and the beautiful natural scene, will live within her memory for years, far more vividly and more truly than the painter could portray it with his colours on paper. My rays followed her till the morning dawn kissed her brow."

Eighth Evening.

Heavy clouds obscured the sky, and the Moon did not make his appearance at all. I stood in my little room, more lonely than ever, and looked up at the sky where he ought to have shown himself. My thoughts flew far away, up to my great friend, who every evening told me such pretty tales, and showed me pictures. Yes, he has had an experience indeed. He glided over the waters of the Deluge, and smiled on Noah's ark just as he lately glanced down upon me, and brought comfort and promise of a new world that was to spring forth from the old. When the Children of Israel sat weeping by the waters of Babylon, he glanced mournfully upon the willows where hung the silent harps. When Romeo climbed the balcony, and the promise of true love fluttered like a cherub toward heaven, the round Moon hung, half hidden among the dark cypresses, in the lucid air. He saw the captive giant at St. Helena, looking from the lonely rock across the wide ocean, while great thoughts swept through his soul. Ah! what tales the Moon can tell. Human life is like a story to him. To-night I shall not see thee again, old friend. To-night I can draw no picture of the memories of thy visit. And, as I looked dreamily towards the clouds, the sky became bright. There was a glancing light, and a beam from the Moon fell upon me. It vanished again, and dark clouds flew past; but still it was a greeting, a friendly good-night offered to me by the Moon.

Ninth Evening.

The air was clear again. Several evenings had passed, and the Moon was in the first quarter. Again he gave me an outline for a sketch. Listen to what he told me.

"I have followed the polar bird and the swimming whale to the eastern coast of Greenland. Gaunt ice-covered rocks and dark clouds hung over a valley, where dwarf willows and barberry bushes stood clothed in green. The blooming lychnis exhaled sweet odours. My light was faint, my face pale as the water lily that, torn from its stem, has been drifting for weeks with the tide. The crown-shaped Northern Light burned fiercely in the sky. Its ring was broad, and from its circumference the rays shot like whirling shafts of fire across the whole sky, flashing in changing radiance from green to red. The inhabitants of that icy region were assembling for dance and festivity; but, accus-

tomed to this glorious spectacle, they scarcely deigned to glance at it. 'Let us leave the souls of the dead to their ball-play with the heads of the walruses,' they thought in their superstition, and they turned their whole attention to the song and dance. In the midst of the circle, and divested of his furry cloak, stood a Greenlander, with a small pipe, and he played and sang a song about catching the seal, and the chorus around chimed in with, '*Eia, Eia, Ah.*' And in their white furs they danced about in the circle, till you might fancy it was a polar bear's ball.

"And now a Court of Judgment was opened. Those Greenlanders who had quarrelled stepped forward, and the offended person chanted forth the faults of his adversary in an extempore song, turning them sharply into ridicule, to the sound of the pipe and the measure of the dance. The defendant replied with satire as keen, while the audience laughed, and gave their verdict. The rocks heaved, the glaciers melted, and great masses of ice and snow came crashing down, shivering to fragments as they fell: it was a glorious Greenland summer night. A hundred paces away, under the open tent of hides, lay a sick man. Life still flowed through his warm blood, but still he was to die—he himself felt it, and all who stood round him knew it also; therefore his wife was already sowing round him the shroud of furs, that she might not afterwards be obliged to touch the dead body. And she asked, 'Wilt thou be buried on the rock, in the firm snow? I will deck the spot with thy *kayak*, and thy arrows, and the *angekokk* shall dance over it. Or wouldst thou rather be buried in the sea?' 'In the sea,' he whispered, and nodded with a mournful smile. 'Yes, it is a pleasant summer tent, the sea,' observed the wife. 'Thousands of seals sport there, the walrus shall lie at thy feet, and the hunt will be safe and merry!' And the yelling children tore the outspread hide from the window-hole, that the dead man might be carried to the ocean, the billowy ocean, that had given him food in life, and that now, in death, was to afford him a place of rest. For his monument, he had the floating, ever-changing icebergs, whereon the seal sleeps, while the storm bird flies round their gleaming summits!"

Tenth Evening.

"I knew an old maid," said the Moon. "Every winter she wore a wrapper of yellow satin, and it always remained new, and was the only fashion she followed. In summer she always wore the same straw hat, and I verily believe the very same grey-blue dress.

THE OLD MAID.

"She never went out, except across the street to an old female friend; and in later years she did not even take this walk, for the old friend was dead. In her solitude my old maid was always busy at the window, which was adorned in summer with pretty flowers, and in winter with cress, grown upon felt. During the last months I saw her no more at the window, but she was still alive. I knew that, for I had not yet seen her begin the 'long journey,' of which she often spoke with her friend. 'Yes, yes,' she was in the habit of saying, 'when I come to die,

I shall take a longer journey than I have made my whole life long. Our family vault is six miles from here. I shall be carried there, and shall sleep there among my family and relatives.' Last night a van stopped at the house. A coffin was carried out, and then I knew that she was dead. They placed straw round the coffin, and the van drove away. There slept the quiet old lady, who had not gone out of her house once for the last year. The van rolled out through the town-gate as briskly as if it were going for a pleasant excursion. On the high-road the pace was quicker yet. The coachman looked nervously round every now and then—I fancy he half expected to see her sitting on the coffin, in her yellow satin wrapper. And because he was startled, he foolishly lashed his horses, while he held the reins so tightly that the poor beasts were in a foam: they were young and fiery. A hare jumped across the road and startled them, and they fairly ran away. The old sober maiden, who had for years and years moved quietly round and round in a dull circle, was now, in death, rattled over stock and stone on the public highway. The coffin in its covering of straw tumbled out of the van, and was left on the high-road, while horses, coachman, and carriage flew past in wild career. The lark rose up carolling from the field, twittering her morning lay over the coffin, and presently perched upon it, picking with her beak at the straw covering, as though she would tear it up. The lark rose up again, singing gaily, and I withdrew behind the red morning clouds."

Eleventh Evening.

"I will give you a picture of Pompeii," said the Moon. "I was in the suburb in the Street of Tombs, as they call it, where the fair monuments stand, in the spot where, ages ago, the merry youths, their temples bound with rosy wreaths, danced with the fair sisters of Laïs. Now, the stillness of death reigned around. German mercenaries, in the Neapolitan service, kept guard, played cards, and diced; and a troop of strangers from beyond the mountains came into the town, accompanied by a sentry. They wanted to see the city that had risen from the grave illumined by my beams; and I showed them the wheel-ruts in the streets paved with broad lava slabs; I showed them the names on the doors, and the signs that hung there yet: they saw in the little courtyard the basins of the fountains, ornamented with shells; but no jet of water gushed upwards, no songs sounded forth from the richly-painted chambers, where the bronze dog kept the door.

"It was the City of the Dead; only Vesuvius thundered forth his everlasting hymn, each separate verse of which is called by men an eruption. We went to the temple of Venus, built of snow-white marble, with its high altar in front of the broad steps, and the weeping willows sprouting freshly forth among the pillars. The air was transparent and blue, and black Vesuvius formed the background, with fire ever shooting forth from it, like the stem of the pine tree. Above it stretched the smoky cloud in the silence of the night, like the crown of the pine, but in a blood-red illumination. Among the company was a lady singer, a real and great singer. I have witnessed the homage paid to her in the greatest cities of Europe. When they came to the tragic theatre, they all sat down on the amphitheatre steps, and thus a small part of the house was occupied by an audience, as it had been many centuries ago. The stage still stood unchanged, with its walled side-scenes, and the two arches in the background, through which the beholders saw the same scene that had been exhibited in the old times—a scene painted by nature herself, namely, the mountains between Sorento and Amalfi. The singer gaily mounted the ancient stage, and sang. The place inspired her, and she reminded me of a wild Arab horse, that rushes headlong on with snorting nostrils and flying mane—her song was so light and yet so firm. Anon I thought of the mourning mother beneath the cross at Golgotha, so deep was the expression of pain. And, just as it had done thousands of years ago, the sound of applause and delight now filled the theatre. 'Happy, gifted creature!' all the hearers exclaimed. Five minutes more, and the stage was empty, the company had vanished, and not a sound more was heard—all were gone. But the ruins stood unchanged, as they will stand when centuries shall have gone by, and when none shall know of the momentary applause and of the triumph of the fair songstress; when all will be forgotten and gone, and even for me this hour will be but a dream of the past."

Twelfth Evening.

"I looked through the windows of an editor's house," said the Moon. "It was somewhere in Germany. I saw handsome furniture, many books, and a chaos of newspapers. Several young men were present: the editor himself stood at his desk, and two little books, both by young authors, were to be noticed. 'This one has been sent to me,' said he. 'I have not read it yet; what think *you* of the contents?' 'Oh,' said the person addressed—he was a poet himself—'it is good enough;

a little broad, certainly; but, you see, the author is still young. The verses might be better, to be sure; the thoughts are sound, though there is certainly a good deal of common-place among them. But what will you have? You can't be always getting something new. That he 'll turn out anything great I don't believe, but you may safely praise him. He is well read, a remarkable Oriental scholar, and has a good judgment. It was he who wrote that nice review of my 'Reflections on Domestic Life.' We must be lenient towards the young man.'

"'But he is a complete hack!' objected another of the gentlemen. 'Nothing is worse in poetry than mediocrity, and he certainly does not go beyond this.'

"'Poor fellow,' observed a third, 'and his aunt is so happy about him. It was she, Mr. Editor, who got together so many subscribers for your last translation.'

"'Ah, the good woman! Well, I have noticed the book briefly. Undoubted talent—a welcome offering—a flower in the garden of poetry—prettily brought out—and so on. But this other book—I suppose the author expects me to purchase it? I hear it is praised. He has genius, certainly: don't you think so?'

"'Yes, all the world declares as much,' replied the poet, 'but it has turned out rather wildly. The punctuation of the book, in particular, is very eccentric.'

"'It will be good for him if we pull him to pieces, and anger him a little, otherwise he will get too good an opinion of himself.'

"'But that would be unfair,' objected the fourth. 'Let us not carp at little faults, but rejoice over the real and abundant good that we find here: he surpasses all the rest.'

"'Not so. If he is a true genius, he can bear the sharp voice of censure. There are people enough to praise him. Don't let us quite turn his head.'

"'Decided talent,' wrote the editor, 'with the usual carelessness. That he can write incorrect verses may be seen in page 25, where there are two false quantities. We recommend him to study the ancients, etc.'

"I went away," continued the Moon, "and looked through the windows in the aunt's house. There sat the be-praised poet, the *tame* one; all the guests paid homage to him, and he was happy.

"I sought the other poet out, the *wild* one; him also I found in a great assembly at his patron's, where the tame poet's book was being discussed.

'I shall read yours also,' said Mæcenas; 'but to speak honestly—you

know I never hide my opinion from you—I don't expect much from it, for you are much too wild, too fantastic. But it must be allowed that, as a man, you are highly respectable.'

"A young girl sat in a corner; and she read in a book these words:

"'In the dust lies genius and glory,
But ev'ry-day talent will *pay*.
It's only the old, old story,
But the piece is repeated each day.'"

Thirteenth Evening.

The Moon said, "Beside the woodland path there are two small farm-houses. The doors are low, and some of the windows are placed quite high, and others close to the ground; and whitethorn and barberry bushes grow around them. The roof of each house is overgrown with moss and with yellow flowers and houseleek. Cabbage and potatoes are the only plants cultivated in the gardens, but out of the hedge there grows a willow tree, and under this willow tree sat a little girl, and she sat with her eyes fixed upon the old oak tree between the two huts.

"It was an old withered stem. It had been sawn off at the top, and a stork had built his nest upon it; and he stood in this nest clapping with his beak. A little boy came and stood by the girl's side: they were brother and sister.

"'What are you looking at?' he asked.

"'I'm watching the stork,' she replied: 'our neighbours told me that he would bring us a little brother or sister to-day; let us watch to see it come!'

"'The stork brings no such things,' the boy declared, 'you may be sure of that. Our neighbour told me the same thing, but she laughed when she said it, and so I asked her if she could say 'On my honour,' and she could not; and I know by that that the story about the storks is not true, and that they only tell it to us children for fun.'

"'But where do the babies come from, then?' asked the girl.

"'Why, an angel from heaven brings them under his cloak, but no man can see him; and that's why we never know when he brings them.'

"At that moment there was a rustling in the branches of the willow tree, and the children folded their hands and looked at one another: it was certainly the angel coming with the baby. They took each other's hand, and at that moment the door of one of the houses opened, and the neighbour appeared.

WATCHING THE STORK.

"'Come in, you two,' she said. 'See what the stork has brought. It is a little brother.'

"And the children nodded gravely at one another, for they had felt quite sure already that the baby was come."

Fourteenth Evening.

"I was gliding over the Lüneburg Heath," the Moon said. "A lonely hut stood by the wayside, a few scanty bushes grew near it, and a

nightingale who had lost his way sang sweetly. He died in the coldness of the night: it was his farewell song that I heard.

"The morning dawn came glimmering red. I saw a caravan of emigrant peasant families who were bound to Hamburgh, there to take ship for America, where fancied prosperity would bloom for them. The mothers carried their little children at their backs, the elder ones tottered by their sides, and a poor starved horse tugged at a cart that bore their scanty effects. The cold wind whistled, and therefore the little girl nestled closer to the mother, who, looking up at my decreasing disc, thought of the bitter want at home, and spoke of the heavy taxes they had not been able to raise. The whole caravan thought of the same thing; therefore, the rising dawn seemed to them a message from the sun, of fortune that was to gleam brightly upon them. They heard the dying nightingale sing: it was no false prophet, but a harbinger of fortune. The wind whistled, therefore they did not understand that the nightingale sung, 'Fare away over the sea! Thou hast paid the long passage with all that was thine, and poor and helpless shalt thou enter Canaan. Thou must sell thyself, thy wife, and thy children. But your griefs shall not last long. Behind the broad fragrant leaves lurks the goddess of Death, and her welcome kiss shall breathe fever into thy blood. Fare away, fare away, over the heaving billows.' And the caravan listened well pleased to the song of the nightingale, which seemed to promise good fortune. Day broke through the light clouds; country people went across the heath to church: the black-gowned women with their white head-dresses looked like ghosts that had stepped forth from the church pictures. All around lay a wide dead plain, covered with faded brown heath, and black charred spaces between the white sand hills. The women carried hymn books, and walked into the church. Oh, pray, pray for those who are wandering to find graves beyond the foaming billows."

Fifteenth Evening.

"I know a Pulcinella,"* the Moon told me. "The public applaud vociferously directly they see him. Every one of his movements is comic, and is sure to throw the house into convulsions of laughter; and yet there is no art in it all—it is complete nature. When he was yet

* The comic or grotesque character of the Italian ballet, from which the English "Punch" takes his origin.

PULCINELLA ON COLUMBINE'S GRAVE.

a little boy, playing about with other boys, he was already Punch. Nature had intended him for it, and had provided him with a hump on his back, and another on his breast; but his inward man, his mind, on the contrary, was richly furnished. No one could surpass him in depth

of feeling or in readiness of intellect. The theatre was his ideal world. If he had possessed a slender well-shaped figure, he might have been the first tragedian on any stage: the heroic, the great, filled his soul; and yet he had to become a Pulcinella. His very sorrow and melancholy did but increase the comic dryness of his sharply-cut features, and increased the laughter of the audience, who showered plaudits on their favourite. The lovely Columbine was indeed kind and cordial to him; but she preferred to marry the Harlequin. It would have been too ridiculous if beauty and ugliness had in reality paired together.

"When Pulcinella was in very bad spirits, she was the only one who could force a hearty burst of laughter, or even a smile from him: first she would be melancholy with him, then quieter, and at last quite cheerful and happy. 'I know very well what is the matter with you,' she said; 'yes, you're in love!' And he could not help laughing. 'I and Love!' he cried, 'that would have an absurd look. How the public would shout!' 'Certainly, you are in love,' she continued; and added with a comic pathos, 'and I am the person you are in love with.' You see, such a thing may be said when it is quite out of the question—and, indeed, Pulcinella burst out laughing, and gave a leap into the air, and his melancholy was forgotten.

"And yet she had only spoken the truth. He *did* love her, love her adoringly, as he loved what was great and lofty in art. At her wedding he was the merriest among the guests, but in the stillness of night he wept: if the public had seen his distorted face then, they would have applauded rapturously.

"And a few days ago, Columbine died. On the day of the funeral, Harlequin was not required to show himself on the boards, for he was a disconsolate widower. The director had to give a very merry piece, that the public might not too painfully miss the pretty Columbine and the agile Harlequin. Therefore Pulcinella had to be more boisterous and extravagant than ever; and he danced and capered, with despair in his heart; and the audience yelled, and shouted '*bravo, bravissimo!*' Pulcinella was actually called before the curtain. He was pronounced inimitable.

"But last night the hideous little fellow went out of the town, quite alone, to the deserted churchyard. The wreath of flowers on Columbine's grave was already faded, and he sat down there. It was a study for a painter. As he sat with his chin on his hands, his eyes turned up towards me, he looked like a grotesque monument—a Punch on a grave—peculiar and whimsical! If the people could have seen their favourite, they would have cried as usual, '*Bravo, Pulcinella; bravo, bravissimo!*'"

Sixteenth Evening.

Hear what the Moon told me. "I have seen the cadet who had just been made an officer put on his handsome uniform for the first time; I have seen the young bride in her wedding dress, and the princess girl-wife happy in her gorgeous robes; but never have I seen a felicity equal to that of a little girl of four years old, whom I watched this evening. She had received a new blue dress, and a new pink hat, the splendid attire had just been put on, and all were calling for a candle, for my rays, shining in through the windows of the room, were not bright enough for the occasion, and further illumination was required. There stood the little maid, stiff and upright as a doll, her arms stretched painfully straight out away from the dress, and her fingers apart; and oh, what happiness beamed from her eyes, and from her whole countenance! 'To-morrow you shall go out in your new clothes,' said her mother; and the little one looked up at her hat, and down at her frock, and smiled brightly. 'Mother,' she cried, 'what will the little dogs think, when they see me in these splendid new things?'"

Seventeenth Evening.

"I have spoken to you of Pompeii," said the Moon; "that corpse of a city, exposed in the view of living towns: I know another sight still more strange, and this is not the corpse, but the spectre of a city. Whenever the jetty fountains splash into the marble basins, they seem to me to be telling the story of the floating city. Yes, the spouting water may tell of her, the waves of the sea may sing of her fame! On the surface of the ocean a mist often rests, and that is her widow's veil. The bridegroom of the sea is dead, his palace and his city are his mausoleum! Dost thou know this city? She has never heard the rolling of wheels or the hoof-tread of horses in her streets, through which the fish swim, while the black gondola glides spectrally over the green water. I will show you the place," continued the Moon, "the largest square in it, and you will fancy yourself transported into the city of a fairy tale. The grass grows rank among the broad flagstones, and in the morning twilight thousands of tame pigeons flutter around the solitary lofty tower. On three sides you find yourself surrounded by cloistered walks. In these the silent Turk sits smoking his long pipe, the handsome Greek leans against the pillar and gazes at the upraised

trophies and lofty masts, memorials of power that is gone. The flags hang down like mourning scarves. A girl rests there: she has put down her heavy pails filled with water, the yoke with which she has carried them rests on one of her shoulders, and she leans against the mast of victory. That is not a fairy palace you see before you yonder, but a church: the gilded domes and shining orbs flash back my beams; the glorious bronze horses up yonder have made journeys, like the bronze horse in the fairy tale: they have come hither, and gone hence, and have returned again. Do you notice the variegated splendour of the walls and windows? It looks as if Genius had followed the caprices of a child, in the adornment of these singular temples. Do you see the winged lion on the pillar? The gold glitters still, but his wings are tied —the lion is dead, for the king of the sea is dead; the great halls stand desolate, and where gorgeous paintings hung of yore, the naked wall now peers through. The *lazzarone* sleeps under the arcade, whose pavement in old times was to be trodden only by the feet of high nobility. From the deep wells, and perhaps from the prisons by the Bridge of Sighs, rise the accents of woe, as at the time when the tambourine was heard in the gay gondolas, and the golden ring was cast from the *Bucentaur* to Adria, the queen of the seas. Adria! shroud thyself in mists; let the veil of thy widowhood shroud thy form, and clothe in the weeds of woe the mausoleum of thy bridegroom—the marble, spectral Venice."

Eighteenth Evening.

"I looked down upon a great theatre," said the Moon. "The house was crowded, for a new actor was to make his first appearance that night. My rays glided over a little window in the wall, and I saw a painted face with the forehead pressed against the panes. It was the hero of the evening. The knightly beard curled crisply about the chin; but there were tears in the man's eyes, for he had been hissed off, and indeed with reason. The poor Incapable! But Incapables cannot be admitted into the empire of Art. He had deep feeling, and loved his art enthusiastically, but the art loved not him. The prompter's bell sounded; '*the hero enters with a determined air*,' so ran the stage direction in his part, and he had to appear before an audience who turned him into ridicule. When the piece was over, I saw a form wrapped in a mantle, creeping down the steps: it was the vanquished knight of the evening. The scene-shifters whispered to one another, and I followed the poor fellow home to his room. To hang one's self is to die a mean

death, and poison is not always at hand, I know; but he thought of both. I saw how he looked at his pale face in the glass, with eyes half closed, to see if he should look well as a corpse. A man may be very unhappy, and yet exceedingly affected. He thought of death, of suicide; I believe he pitied himself, for he wept bitterly, and when a man has had his cry out he doesn't kill himself.

"Since that time a year had rolled by. Again a play was to be acted, but in a little theatre, and by a poor strolling company. Again I saw the well-remembered face, with the painted cheeks and the crisp beard. He looked up at me and smiled; and yet he had been hissed off only a minute before—hissed off from a wretched theatre, by a miserable audience. And to-night a shabby hearse rolled out of the town-gate. It was a suicide—our painted, despised hero. The driver of the hearse was the only person present, for no one followed except my beams. In a corner of the churchyard the corpse of the suicide was shovelled into the earth, and nettles will soon be growing rankly over his grave, and the sexton will throw thorns and weeds from the other graves upon it."

Nineteenth Evening.

"I come from Rome," said the Moon. "In the midst of the city, upon one of the seven hills, lie the ruins of the imperial palace. The wild fig tree grows in the clefts of the wall, and covers the nakedness thereof with its broad grey-green leaves; trampling among heaps of rubbish, the ass treads upon green laurels, and rejoices over the rank thistles. From this spot, whence the eagles of Rome once flew abroad, whence they 'came, saw, and conquered,' our door leads into a little mean house, built of clay between two pillars; the wild vine hangs like a mourning garland over the crooked window. An old woman and her little granddaughter live there: they rule now in the palace of the Cæsars, and show to strangers the remains of its past glories. Of the splendid throne-hall only a naked wall yet stands, and a black cypress throws its dark shadow on the spot where the throne once stood. The dust lies several feet deep on the broken pavement; and the little maiden, now the daughter of the imperial palace, often sits there on her stool when the evening bells ring. The keyhole of the door close by she calls her turret window; through this she can see half Rome, as far as the mighty cupola of St. Peter's.

"On this evening, as usual, stillness reigned around; and in the

full beam of my light came the little granddaughter. On her head she carried an earthen pitcher of antique shape filled with water. Her feet were bare, her short frock and her white sleeves were torn. I kissed her pretty round shoulders, her dark eyes, and black shining hair. She mounted the stairs; they were steep, having been made up of rough blocks of broken marble and the capital of a fallen pillar. The coloured lizards slipped away, startled, from before her feet, but she was not frightened at them. Already she lifted her hand to pull the door-bell—a hare's foot fastened to a string formed the bell-handle of the imperial palace. She paused for a moment—of what might she be thinking? Perhaps of the beautiful Christ-child, dressed in gold and silver, which was down below in the chapel, where the silver candlesticks gleamed so bright, and where her little friends sung the hymns in which she also could join? I know not. Presently she moved again—she stumbled; the earthen vessel fell from her head, and broke on the marble steps. She burst into tears. The beautiful daughter of the imperial palace wept over the worthless broken pitcher; with her bare feet she stood there weeping, and dared not pull the string, the bell-rope of the imperial palace!"

Twentieth Evening.

It was more than a fortnight since the Moon had shone. Now he stood once more, round and bright, above the clouds, moving slowly onward. Hear what the Moon told me.

"From a town in Fezzan I followed a caravan. On the margin of the sandy desert, in a salt plain, that shone like a frozen lake, and was only covered in spots with light drifting sand, a halt was made. The eldest of the company—the water gourd hung at his girdle, and on his head was a little bag of unleavened bread—drew a square in the sand with his staff, and wrote in it a few words out of the Koran, and then the whole caravan passed over the consecrated spot. A young merchant, a child of the East, as I could tell by his eye and his figure, rode pensively forward on his white snorting steed. Was he thinking, perchance, of his fair young wife? It was only two days ago that the camel, adorned with furs and with costly shawls, had carried her, the beauteous bride, round the walls of the city, while drums and cymbals had sounded, the women sang, and festive shots, of which the bridegroom fired the greatest number, resounded round the camel; and now he was journeying with the caravan across the desert.

"For many nights I followed the train. I saw them rest by the well-side among the stunted palms; they thrust the knife into the breast of the camel that had fallen, and roasted its flesh by the fire. My beams cooled the glowing sands, and showed them the black rocks, dead islands in the immense ocean of sand. No hostile tribes met them in their pathless route, no storms arose, no columns of sand whirled destruction over the journeying caravan. At home the beautiful wife prayed for her husband and her father. 'Are they dead?' she asked of my golden crescent; 'Are they dead?' she cried to my full disc. Now the desert lies behind them. This evening they sit beneath the lofty palm trees, where the crane flutters round them with its long wings, and the pelican watches them from the branches of the mimosa. The luxuriant herbage is trampled down, crushed by the feet of elephants. A troop of negroes are returning from a market in the interior of the land: the women, with copper buttons in their black hair, and decked out in clothes dyed with indigo, drive the heavily-laden oxen, on whose backs slumber the naked black children. A negro leads a young lion which he has bought, by a string. They approach the caravan; the young merchant sits pensive and motionless, thinking of his beautiful wife, dreaming, in the land of the blacks, of his white fragrant lily beyond the desert. He raises his head, and——" But at this moment a cloud passed before the Moon, and then another. I heard nothing more from him this evening.

Twenty-first Evening.

"I saw a little girl weeping," said the Moon; "she was weeping over the depravity of the world. She had received a most beautiful doll as a present. Oh, that was a glorious doll, so fair and delicate! She did not seem created for the sorrows of this world. But the brothers of the little girl, those great naughty boys, had set the doll high up in the branches of a tree, and had run away.

"The little girl could not reach up to the doll, and could not help her down, and that is why she was crying. The doll must certainly have been crying too; for she stretched out her arms among the green branches, and looked quite mournful. Yes, these are the troubles of life of which the little girl had often heard tell. Alas, poor doll! it began to grow dark already; and suppose night were to come on completely! Was she to be left sitting there alone on the bough all night long? No, the little maid could not make up her mind to that. 'I'll stay with you,' she said, although she felt anything but happy in her mind. She could

almost fancy she distinctly saw little gnomes, with their high-crowned hats, sitting in the bushes; and further back in the long walk, tall spectres appeared to be dancing. They came nearer and nearer, and

THE LITTLE GIRL'S TROUBLE.

stretched out their hands towards the tree on which the doll sat; they laughed scornfully, and pointed at her with their fingers. Oh, how frightened the little maid was! 'But if one has not done anything wrong,' she thought, 'nothing evil can harm one. I wonder if I have

done anything wrong?' And she considered. 'Oh, yes! I laughed at the poor duck with the red rag on her leg; she limped along so funnily, I could not help laughing; but it 's a sin to laugh at animals.' And she looked up at the doll. 'Did you laugh at the duck too?' she asked; and it seemed as if the doll shook her head."

Twenty-second Evening.

"I looked down upon Tyrol," said the Moon, "and my beams caused the dark pines to throw long shadows upon the rocks. I looked at the pictures of St. Christopher carrying the Infant Jesus that are painted there upon the walls of the houses, colossal figures reaching from the ground to the roof. St. Florian was represented pouring water on the burning house, and the Lord hung bleeding on the great cross by the wayside. To the present generation these are old pictures, but I saw when they were put up, and marked how one followed the other. On the brow of the mountain yonder is perched, like a swallow's nest, a lonely convent of nuns. Two of the sisters stood up in the tower tolling the bell; they were both young, and therefore their glances flew over the mountain out into the world. A travelling coach passed by below, the postillion wound his horn, and the poor nuns looked after the carriage for a moment with a mournful glance, and a tear gleamed in the eyes of the younger one. And the horn sounded faint and more faintly, and the convent bell drowned its expiring echoes."

Twenty-third Evening.

Hear what the Moon told me. "Some years ago, here in Copenhagen, I looked through the window of a mean little room. The father and mother slept, but the little son was not asleep. I saw the flowered cotton curtains of the bed move, and the child peep forth. At first I thought he was looking at the great clock, which was gaily painted in red and green. At the top sat a cuckoo, below hung the heavy leaden weights, and the pendulum with the polished disc of metal went to and fro, and said 'tick, tick.' But no, he was not looking at the clock, but at his mother's spinning wheel, that stood just underneath it. That was the boy's favourite piece of furniture, but he dared not touch it, for if he meddled with it he got a rap on the knuckles. For hours together, when his mother was spinning, he would sit quietly by her side, watch-

ing the murmuring spindle and the revolving wheel, and as he sat he thought of many things. Oh, if he might only turn the wheel himself! Father and mother were asleep; he looked at them, and looked at the spinning wheel, and presently a little naked foot peered out of the bed, and then a second foot, and then two little white legs. There he stood. He looked round once more, to see if father and mother were still asleep—yes, they slept; and now he crept *softly*, *softly*, in his short little nightgown, to the spinning wheel, and began to spin. The thread flew from the wheel, and the wheel whirled faster and faster. I kissed his fair hair and his blue eyes, it was such a pretty picture.

"At that moment the mother awoke. The curtain shook, she looked forth, and fancied she saw a gnome or some other kind of little spectre. 'In Heaven's name!' she cried, and aroused her husband in a frightened way. He opened his eyes, rubbed them with his hands, and looked at the brisk little lad. 'Why, that is Bertel,' said he. And my eye quitted the poor room, for I have so much to see. At the same moment I looked at the halls of the Vatican, where the marble gods are enthroned. I shone upon the group of the Laocoon; the stone seemed to sigh. I pressed a silent kiss on the lips of the Muses, and they seemed to stir and move. But my rays lingered longest about the Nile group with the colossal god. Leaning against the Sphinx, he lies there thoughtful and meditative, as if he were thinking on the rolling centuries; and little love-gods sport with him and with the crocodiles. In the horn of plenty sat with folded arms a little tiny love-god, contemplating the great solemn river-god, a true picture of the boy at the spinning wheel—the features were exactly the same. Charming and life-like stood the little marble form, and yet the wheel of the year has turned more than a thousand times since the time when it sprang forth from the stone. Just as often as the boy in the little room turned the spinning wheel had the great wheel murmured, before the age could again call forth marble gods equal to those he afterwards formed.

"Years have passed since all this happened," the Moon went on to say. "Yesterday I looked upon a bay on the eastern coast of Denmark. Glorious woods are there, and high trees, an old knightly castle with red walls, swans floating in the ponds, and in the background appears, among orchards, a little town with a church. Many boats, the crews all furnished with torches, glided over the silent expanse—but these fires had not been kindled for catching fish, for everything had a festive look. Music sounded, a song was sung, and in one of the boats the man stood erect to whom homage was paid by the rest, a tall sturdy man, wrapped in a cloak. He had blue eyes and long white hair. I knew him, and

LITTLE BERTEL'S AMBITION.

thought of the Vatican, and of the group of the Nile, and the old marble gods. I thought of the simple little room where little Bertel sat in his night-shirt by the spinning wheel. The wheel of time has turned, and new gods have come forth from the stone. From the boats there arose a shout: 'Hurrah, hurrah for Bertel Thorwaldsen!'"

Twenty-fourth Evening.

"I will now give you a picture from Frankfort," said the Moon. "I especially noticed one building there. It was not the house in which Goethe was born, nor the old Council House, through whose grated windows peered the horns of the oxen that were roasted and given to the people when the emperors were crowned. No, it was a private house, plain in appearance, and painted green. It stood near the old Jews' Street. It was Rothschild's house.

"I looked through the open door. The staircase was brilliantly lighted: servants carrying wax candles in massive silver candlesticks stood there, and bowed low before an old woman, who was being brought downstairs in a litter. The proprietor of the house stood bare-headed, and respectfully imprinted a kiss on the hand of the old woman. She was his mother. She nodded in a friendly manner to him and to the servants, and they carried her into the dark narrow street, into a little house, that was her dwelling. Here her children had been born, from hence the fortune of the family had arisen. If she deserted the despised street and the little house, fortune would also desert her children. That was her firm belief."

The Moon told me no more; his visit this evening was far too short. But I thought of the old woman in the narrow despised street. It would have cost her but a word, and a brilliant house would have arisen for her on the banks of the Thames—a word, and a villa would have been prepared in the Bay of Naples.

"If I deserted the lowly house, where the fortunes of my sons first began to bloom, fortune would desert them!" It was a superstition, but a superstition of such a class, that he who knows the story and has seen this picture, need have only two words placed under the picture to make him understand it; and these two words are: "A mother."

Twenty-fifth Evening.

"It was yesterday, in the morning twilight"—these are the words the Moon told me—"in the great city no chimney was yet smoking—and it was just at the chimneys that I was looking. Suddenly a little head emerged from one of them, and then half a body, the arms resting on the rim of the chimney-pot. 'Ya-hip! ya-hip!' cried a voice. It was the little chimney-sweeper, who had for the first time in his life crept

through a chimney, and stuck out his head at the top. 'Ya-hip! ya-hip!' Yes, certainly that was a very different thing to creeping about in the dark narrow chimneys! the air blew so fresh, and he could look over the whole city towards the green wood. The sun was just rising. It shone round and great, just in his face, that beamed with triumph, though it was very prettily blacked with soot.

"'The whole town can see me now,' he exclaimed, 'and the moon can see me now, and the sun too. Ya-hip! ya-hip!' And he flourished his broom in triumph."

PRETTY PU.

Twenty-sixth Evening.

"Last night I looked down upon a town in China," said the Moon. "My beams irradiated the naked walls that form the streets there. Now and then, certainly, a door is seen; but it is locked, for what does the Chinaman care about the outer world? Close wooden shutters covered the windows behind the walls of the houses; but through the windows

of the temple a faint light glimmered. I looked in, and saw the quaint decorations within. From the floor to the ceiling pictures are painted, in the most glaring colours, and richly gilt—pictures representing the deeds of the gods here on earth. In each niche statues are placed, but they are almost entirely hidden by the coloured drapery and the banners that hang down. Before each idol (and they are all made of tin) stood a little altar of holy water, with flowers and burning wax lights on it. Above all the rest stood Fo, the chief deity, clad in a garment of yellow silk, for yellow is here the sacred colour. At the foot of the altar sat a living being, a young priest. He appeared to be praying, but in the midst of his prayer he seemed to fall into deep thought, and this must have been wrong, for his cheeks glowed and he held down his head. Poor Soui-hong! Was he, perhaps, dreaming of working in the little flower garden behind the high street wall? And did that occupation seem more agreeable to him than watching the wax lights in the temple? Or did he wish to sit at the rich feast, wiping his mouth with silver paper between each course? Or was his sin so great that, if he dared utter it, the Celestial Empire would punish it with death? Had his thoughts ventured to fly with the ships of the barbarians, to their homes in far distant England? No, his thoughts did not fly so far, and yet they were sinful, sinful as thoughts born of young hearts, sinful here in the temple, in the presence of Fo and the other holy gods.

"I know whither his thoughts had strayed. At the farther end of the city, on the flat roof paved with porcelain, on which stood the handsome vases covered with painted flowers, sat the beauteous Pu, of the little roguish eyes, of the full lips, and of the tiny feet. The tight shoe pained her, but her heart pained her still more. She lifted her graceful round arm, and her satin dress rustled. Before her stood a glass bowl containing four gold-fish. She stirred the bowl carefully with a slender lacquered stick, very slowly, for she, too, was lost in thought. Was she thinking, perchance, how the fishes were richly clothed in gold, how they lived calmly and peacefully in their crystal world, how they were regularly fed, and yet how much happier they might be if they were free? Yes, that she could well understand, the beautiful Pu. Her thoughts wandered away from her home, wandered to the temple, but not for the sake of holy things. Poor Pu! Poor Soui-hong!

"Their earthly thoughts met, but my cold beam lay between the two, like the sword of the cherub."

Twenty-seventh Evening.

"The air was calm," said the Moon; "the water was transparent as the purest ether through which I was gliding, and deep below the surface I could see the strange plants that stretched up their long arms towards me like the gigantic trees of the forest. The fishes swam to and fro above their tops. High in the air a flight of wild swans were winging their way, one of which sank lower and lower, with wearied pinions, his eyes following the airy caravan, that melted farther and farther into the distance. With outspread wings he sank slowly, as a soap bubble sinks in the still air, till he touched the water. At length his head lay back between his wings, and silently he lay there, like a white lotus flower upon the quiet lake. And a gentle wind arose, and crisped the quiet surface, which gleamed like the clouds that poured along in great broad waves; and the swan raised his head, and the glowing water splashed like blue fire over his breast and back. The morning dawn illuminated the red clouds, the swan rose strengthened, and flew towards the rising sun, towards the bluish coast whither the caravan had gone; but he flew alone, with a longing in his breast. Lonely he flew over the blue swelling billows."

Twenty-eighth Evening.

"I will give you another picture of Sweden," said the Moon. "Among dark pine woods, near the melancholy banks of the Stoxen, lies the old convent church of Wreta. My rays glided through the grating into the roomy vaults, where kings sleep tranquilly in great stone coffins. On the wall, above the grave of each, is placed the emblem of earthly grandeur, a kingly crown; but it is made only of wood, painted and gilt, and is hung on a wooden peg driven into the wall. The worms have gnawed the gilded wood, the spider has spun her web from the crown down to the sand, like a mourning banner, frail and transient as the grief of mortals. How quietly they sleep! I can remember them quite plainly. I still see the bold smile on their lips, that so strongly and plainly expressed joy or grief. When the steamboat winds along like a magic snail over the lakes, a stranger often comes to the church, and visits the burial vault; he asks the names of the kings, and they have a dead and forgotten sound. He glances with a smile at the worm-eaten crowns, and if he happens to be a pious, thoughtful

man, something of melancholy mingles with the smile. Slumber on, ye dead ones! The Moon thinks of you, the Moon at night sends down his rays into your silent kingdom, over which hangs the crown of pine wood."

Twenty-ninth Evening.

"Close by the high-road," said the Moon, "is an inn, and opposite to it is a great waggon-shed, whose straw roof was just being re-thatched. I looked down between the bare rafters and through the open loft into the comfortless space below. The turkey-cock slept on the beam, and the saddle rested in the empty crib. In the middle of the shed stood a travelling carriage; the proprietor was inside, fast asleep, while the horses were being watered. The coachman stretched himself, though I am very sure that he had been most comfortably asleep half the last stage. The door of the servants' room stood open, and the bed looked as if it had been turned over and over; the candle stood on the floor, and had burnt deep down into the socket. The wind blew cold through the shed: it was nearer to the dawn than to midnight. In the wooden frame on the ground slept a wandering family of musicians. The father and mother seemed to be dreaming of the burning liquor that remained in the bottle. The little pale daughter was dreaming too, for her eyes were wet with tears. The harp stood at their heads, and the dog lay stretched at their feet."

Thirtieth Evening.

"It was in a little provincial town," the Moon said; "it certainly happened last year, but that has nothing to do with the matter. I saw it quite plainly. To-day I read about it in the papers, but there it was not half so clearly expressed. In the taproom of the little inn sat the bear leader, eating his supper; the bear was tied up outside, behind the wood pile—poor Bruin, who did nobody any harm, though he looked grim enough. Up in the garret three little children were playing by the light of my beams; the eldest was perhaps six years old, the youngest certainly not more than two. 'Tramp, tramp'—somebody was coming upstairs: who might it be? The door was thrust open—it was Bruin, the great, shaggy Bruin! He had got tired of waiting down in the courtyard, and had found his way to the stairs. I saw it all," said the Moon. "The children were very much frightened at first at the great

THE BEAR PLAYING AT SOLDIERS WITH THE CHILDREN.

shaggy animal; each of them crept into a corner, but he found them all out, and smelt at them, but did them no harm. 'This must be a great

dog,' they said, and began to stroke him. He lay down upon the ground, the youngest boy clambered on his back, and bending down a little head of golden curls, played at hiding in the beast's shaggy skin. Presently the eldest boy took his drum, and beat upon it till it rattled again; the bear rose upon his hind legs, and began to dance. It was a charming sight to behold. Each boy now took his gun, and the bear was obliged to have one too, and he held it up quite properly. Here was a capital playmate they had found; and they began marching—one, two; one, two.

"Suddenly some one came to the door, which opened, and the mother of the children appeared. You should have seen her in her dumb terror, with her face as white as chalk, her mouth half open, and her eyes fixed in a horrified stare. But the youngest boy nodded to her in great glee, and called out in his infantile prattle, 'We're playing at soldiers.' And then the bear leader came running up."

Thirty-first Evening.

The wind blew stormy and cold, the clouds flew hurriedly past; only for a moment now and then did the Moon become visible. He said, "I looked down from the silent sky upon the driving clouds, and saw the great shadows chasing each other across the earth. I looked upon a prison. A closed carriage stood before it; a prisoner was to be carried away. My rays pierced through the grated window towards the wall: the prisoner was scratching a few lines upon it, as a parting token; but he did not write words, but a melody, the outpouring of his heart. The door was opened, and he was led forth, and fixed his eyes upon my round disc. Clouds passed between us, as if he were not to see my face, nor I his. He stepped into the carriage, the door was closed, the whip cracked, and the horses galloped off into the thick forest, whither my rays were not able to follow him; but as I glanced through the grated window, my rays glided over the notes, his last farewell engraved on the prison wall—where words fail, sounds can often speak. My rays could only light up isolated notes, so the greater part of what was written there will ever remain dark to me. Was it the death-hymn he wrote there? Were these the glad notes of joy? Did he drive away to meet death, or hasten to the embraces of his beloved? The rays of the Moon do not read all that is written by mortals."

Thirty-second Evening.

"I love the children," said the Moon, "especially the quite little ones—they are so droll. Sometimes I peep into the room, between the curtain and the window frame, when they are not thinking of me. It gives me pleasure to see them dressing and undressing. First, the little round naked shoulder comes creeping out of the frock, then the arm; or I see how the stocking is drawn off, and a plump little white leg makes its appearance, and a white little foot that is fit to be kissed, and I kiss it too.

"But about what I was going to tell you. This evening I looked through a window, before which no curtain was drawn, for nobody lives opposite. I saw a whole troop of little ones, all of one family, and among them was a little sister. She is only four years old, but can say her prayers as well as any of the rest. The mother sits by her bed every evening, and hears her say her prayers; and then she has a kiss, and the mother sits by the bed till the little one has gone to sleep, which generally happens as soon as ever she can close her eyes.

"This evening the two elder children were a little boisterous. One of them hopped about on one leg in his long white nightgown, and the other stood on a chair surrounded by the clothes of all the children, and declared he was acting Grecian statues. The third and fourth laid the clean linen carefully in the box, for that is a thing that has to be done; and the mother sat by the bed of the youngest, and announced to all the rest that they were to be quiet, for little sister was going to say her prayers.

"I looked in, over the lamp, into the little maiden's bed, where she lay under the neat white coverlet, her hands folded demurely and her little face quite grave and serious. She was praying the Lord's prayer aloud. But her mother interrupted her in the middle of her prayer. 'How is it,' she asked, 'that when you have prayed for daily bread, you always add something I cannot understand? You must tell me what that is.' The little one lay silent, and looked at her mother in embarrassment. 'What is it you say after *our daily bread?*' 'Dear mother, don't be angry: I only said, *and plenty of butter on it.*'"

THE STORY OF THE YEAR.

It was far in January, and a terrible fall of snow was pelting down. The snow eddied through the streets and lanes; the window-panes seemed plastered with snow on the outside; snow plumped down in masses from the roofs: and a sudden hurry had seized on the people, for they ran, and flew, and fell into each others' arms, and as they clutched each other fast for a moment, they felt that they were safe at least for that length of time. Coaches and horses seemed frosted with sugar. The footmen stood with their backs against the carriages, so as to turn their faces from the wind. The foot passengers kept in the shelter of the carriages, which could only move slowly on in the deep snow; and when the storm at last abated, and a narrow path was swept clean alongside the houses, the people stood still in this path when they met, for none liked to take the first step aside into the deep snow to let the other pass him. Thus they stood silent and motionless, till, as if by tacit consent, each sacrificed one leg, and stepping aside, buried it in the deep snow-heap.

Towards evening it grew calm. The sky looked as if it had been swept, and had become more lofty and transparent. The stars looked as if they were quite new, and some of them were amazingly bright and pure. It froze so hard that the snow creaked, and the upper rind of snow might well have grown hard enough to bear the sparrows in the morning dawn. These little birds hopped up and down where the sweeping had been done; but they found very little food, and were not a little cold.

"Piep!" said one of them to another; "they call this a new year, and it is worse than the last! We might just as well have kept the old one. I'm dissatisfied, and I've a right to be so."

"Yes; and the people ran about and fired off shots to celebrate the new year," said a little shivering sparrow; "and they threw pans and pots against the doors, and were quite boisterous with joy, because the old year was gone. I was glad of it too, because I hoped we should have had warm days; but that has come to nothing—it freezes much harder than before. People have made a mistake in reckoning the time!"

"That they have!" a third put in, who was old, and had a white poll; "they've something they call the calendar—it's an invention of their

own—and everything is to be arranged according to that; but it won't do. When spring comes, then the year begins, and I reckon according to that."

"But when will spring come?" the others inquired.

"It will come when the stork comes back. But his movements are very uncertain, and here in town no one knows anything about it: in the country they are better informed. Shall we fly out there and wait? There, at any rate, we shall be nearer to spring."

"Yes, that may be all very well," observed one of the sparrows, who had been hopping about for a long time, chirping, without saying anything decided. "I 've found a few comforts here in town, which I am afraid I should miss out in the country. Near this neighbourhood, in a courtyard, there lives a family of people, who have taken the very sensible notion of placing three or four flower-pots against the wall, with their mouths all turned inwards, and the bottom of each pointing outwards. In each flower-pot a hole has been cut, big enough for me to fly in and out at it. I and my husband have built a nest in one of those pots, and have brought up our young family there. The family of people of course made the whole arrangement that they might have the pleasure of seeing us, or else they would not have done it. To please themselves they also strew crumbs of bread; and so we have food, and are in a manner provided for. So I think my husband and I will stay where we are, although we are very dissatisfied—but we shall stay."

"And we will fly into the country to see if spring is not coming!" And away they flew.

Out in the country it was hard winter, and the glass was a few degrees lower than in the town. The sharp winds swept across the snow-covered fields. The farmer, muffled in warm mittens, sat in his sledge, and beat his arms across his breast to warm himself, and the whip lay across his knees. The horses ran till they smoked again. The snow creaked, and the sparrows hopped about in the ruts, and shivered, "Piep! when will spring come? it is very long in coming!"

"Very long," sounded from the next snow-covered hill, far over the field. It might be the echo which was heard; or perhaps the words were spoken by yonder wonderful old man, who sat in wind and weather high on the heap of snow. He was quite white, attired like a peasant in a coarse white coat of frieze; he had long white hair, and was quite pale, with big blue eyes.

"Who is that old man yonder?" asked the sparrows.

"I know who he is," quoth an old raven, who sat on the fence-rail, and was condescending enough to acknowledge that we are all like little

birds in the sight of Heaven, and therefore was not above speaking to the sparrows, and giving them information. "I know who the old man is. It is Winter, the old man of last year. He is not dead, as the calendar says, but is guardian to little Prince Spring, who is to come. Yes, Winter bears sway here. Ugh! the cold makes you shiver, does it not, you little ones?"

"Yes. Did I not tell the truth?" said the smallest sparrow: "the calendar is only an invention of man, and is not arranged according to nature! They ought to leave these things to us, who are born cleverer than they."

And one week passed away, and two passed away. The frozen lake lay hard and stiff, looking like a sheet of lead, and damp icy mists lay brooding over the land; the great black crows flew about in long rows, but silently; and it seemed as if nature slept. Then a sunbeam glided along over the lake, and made it shine like burnished tin. The snowy covering on the field and on the hill did not glitter as it had done; but the white form, Winter himself, still sat there, his gaze fixed unswervingly upon the south. He did not notice that the snowy carpet seemed to sink as it were into the earth, and that here and there a little grass-green patch appeared, and that all these patches were crowded with sparrows.

"Kee-wit! kee-wit! Is spring coming now?"

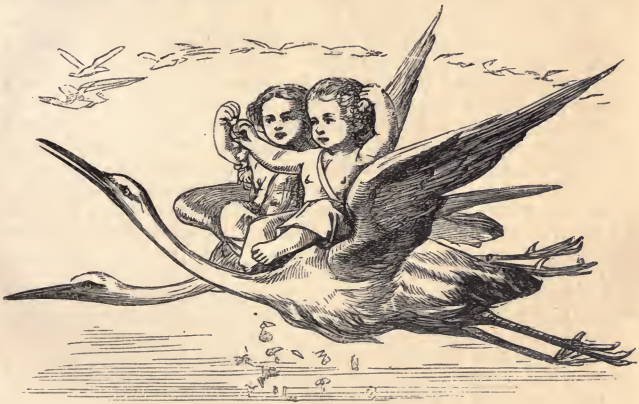
"Spring!" The cry resounded over field and meadow, and through the black-brown woods, where the moss still glimmered in bright green upon the tree trunks; and from the south the first two storks came flying through the air. On the back of each sat a pretty little child—one was a girl and the other a boy. They greeted the earth with a kiss, and wherever they set their feet, white flowers grew up from beneath the snow. Then they went hand in hand to the old ice man, Winter, clung to his breast embracing him, and in a moment they, and he, and all the region around were hidden in a thick damp mist, dark and heavy, that closed over all like a veil. Gradually the wind rose, and now it rushed roaring along, and drove away the mist with heavy blows, so that the sun shone warmly forth, and Winter himself vanished, and the beautiful children of Spring sat on the throne of the year.

"That's what I call spring," cried each of the sparrows. "Now we shall get our rights, and have amends for the stern winter."

Wherever the two children turned, green buds burst forth on bushes and trees, the grass shot upwards, and the corn-fields turned green and became more and more lovely. And the little maiden strewed flowers all around. Her apron, which she held up before her, was always full

of them; they seemed to spring up there, for her lap continued full, however zealously she strewed the blossoms around; and in her eagerness she scattered a snow of blossoms over apple trees and peach trees, so that they stood in full beauty before their green leaves had fairly come forth.

And she clapped her hands, and the boy clapped his, and then flocks of birds came flying up, nobody knew whence, and they all twittered and sang, "Spring has come."



THE STORKS BRINGING BACK THE SPRING.

That was beautiful to behold. Many an old granny crept forth over the threshold into the sunshine, and tripped gleefully about, casting a glance at the yellow flowers which shone everywhere in the fields, just as they used to do when she was young. The world grew young again to her, and she said, "It is a blessed day out here to-day!"

The forest still wore its brown-green dress, made of buds; but the thyme was already there, fresh and fragrant; there were violets in plenty, anemones and primroses came forth, and there was sap and strength in every blade of grass. That was certainly a beautiful carpet on which no one could resist sitting down, and there accordingly the young spring pair sat hand in hand, and sang and smiled, and grew on.

A mild rain fell down upon them from the sky, but they did not notice it, for the rain-drops were mingled with their own tears of joy. They kissed each other, and were betrothed as people that should marry, and in the same moment the verdure of the woods was unfolded, and when the sun rose, the forest stood there arrayed in green.

And hand in hand the betrothed pair wandered under the fresh pendent ocean of leaves, where the rays of the sun gleamed through the interstices in lovely, changing hues. What virgin purity, what refreshing balm in the delicate leaves! The brooks and streams rippled clearly and merrily among the green velvety rushes and over the coloured pebbles. All nature seemed to say, "There is plenty, and there shall be plenty always!" And the cuckoo sang and the lark carolled: it was a charming spring; but the willows had woolly gloves over their blossoms: they were desperately careful, and that is wearisome.

And days went by and weeks went by, and the heat came as it were whirling down. Hot waves of air came through the corn, that became yellower and yellower. The white water-lily of the north spread its great green leaves over the glassy mirror of the woodland lakes, and the fishes sought out the shady spots beneath; and at the sheltered side of the wood, where the sun shone down upon the walls of the farmhouse, warming the blooming roses, and the cherry trees, which hung full of juicy black berries, almost hot with the fierce beams, there sat the lovely wife of Summer, the same being whom we have seen as a child and as a bride; and her glance was fixed upon the black gathering clouds, which in wavy outlines—blue-black and heavy—were piling themselves up, like mountains, higher and higher. They came from three sides, and growing like a petrified sea, they came swooping towards the forest, where every sound had been silenced as if by magic. Every breath of air was hushed, every bird was mute. There was a seriousness—a suspense throughout all nature; but in the highways and lanes, foot passengers, and riders, and men in carriages were hurrying on to get under shelter. Then suddenly there was a flashing of light, as if the sun were burst forth—flaming, burning, all-devouring! And the darkness returned amid a rolling crash. The rain poured down in streams, and there was alternate darkness and blinding light; alternate silence and deafening clamour. The young, brown, feathery reeds on the moor moved to and fro in long waves, the twigs of the woods were hidden in a mist of waters, and still came darkness and light, and still silence and roaring followed one another; grass and corn lay beaten down and swamped, looking as though they could never raise themselves again. But soon the rain fell only in gentle drops, the sun peered through the

SUMMER TIME.

clouds, the water-drops glittered like pearls on the leaves, the birds sang, the fishes leaped up from the surface of the lake, the gnats danced in the sunshine, and yonder on the rock, in the salt, heaving sea water, sat Summer himself—a strong man with sturdy limbs and long dripping hair—there he sat, strengthened by the cool bath, in the warm sunshine. All nature round about was renewed, everything stood luxuriant, strong and beautiful; it was summer, warm, lovely summer.

And pleasant and sweet was the fragrance that streamed upwards

from the rich clover-field, where the bees swarmed round the old ruined place of meeting: the bramble wound itself around the altar stone, which, washed by the rain, glittered in the sunshine; and thither flew the queen-bee with her swarm, and prepared wax and honey. Only Summer saw it, he and his strong wife; for them the altar table stood covered with the offerings of nature.

And the evening sky shone like gold, shone as no church dome can shine; and in the interval between the evening and the morning red, there was moonlight: it was summer.

And days went by, and weeks went by. The bright scythes of the reapers gleamed in the corn-fields; the branches of the apple trees bent down, heavy with red-and-yellow fruit. The hops smelt sweetly, hanging in large clusters; and under the hazel bushes where hung great bunches of nuts, rested a man and woman—Summer and his quiet consort.

"What wealth!" exclaimed the woman: "all around a blessing is diffused, everywhere the scene looks homelike and good; and yet—I know not why—I long for peace and rest—I know not how to express it. Now they are already ploughing again in the field. The people want to gain more and more. See, the storks flock together, and follow at a little distance behind the plough—the bird of Egypt that carried us through the air. Do you remember how we came as children to this land of the North? We brought with us flowers, and pleasant sunshine, and green to the woods; the wind has treated them roughly, and they have become dark and brown like the trees of the South, but they do not, like them, bear fruit."

"Do you wish to see the golden fruit?" said the man: "then rejoice." And he lifted his arm, and the leaves of the forest put on hues of red and gold, and beauteous tints spread over all the woodland. The rose bush gleamed with scarlet hips; the elder branches hung down with great heavy bunches of dark berries; the wild chestnuts fell ripe from their dark husks; and in the depths of the forests the violets bloomed for the second time.

But the Queen of the Year became more and more silent, and paler and paler. "It blows cold," she said, "and night brings damp mists. I long for the land of my childhood."

And she saw the storks fly away, one and all; and she stretched forth her hands towards them. She looked up at the nests, which stood empty. In one of them the long-stalked cornflower was growing; in another, the yellow mustard-seed, as if the nest were only there for its protection and comfort; and the sparrows were flying up into the storks' nests.

"Piep! where has the master gone? I suppose he can't bear it when the wind blows, and that therefore he has left the country. I wish him a pleasant journey!"

The forest leaves became more and more yellow, leaf fell down upon leaf, and the stormy winds of autumn howled. The year was far advanced, and the Queen of the Year reclined upon the fallen yellow leaves, and looked with mild eyes at the gleaming star, and her husband stood by her. A gust swept through the leaves; they fell again in a shower, and the Queen was gone, but a butterfly, the last of the season, flew through the cold air.

The wet fogs came, an icy wind blew, and the long dark nights drew on apace. The Ruler of the Year stood there with locks white as snow, but he knew not it was his hair that gleamed so white—he thought snow-flakes were falling from the clouds; and soon a thin covering of snow was spread over the fields.

And then the church bells rang for the Christmas time.

"The bells ring for the new-born," said the Ruler of the Year. "Soon the new king and queen will be born; and I shall go to rest, as my wife has done—to rest in the gleaming star."

And in the fresh green fir wood, where the snow lay, stood the Angel of Christmas, and consecrated the young trees that were to adorn his feast.

"May there be joy in the room, and under the green boughs," said the Ruler of the Year. In a few weeks he had become a very old man, white as snow. "My time for rest draws near, and the young pair of the year shall now receive my crown and sceptre."

"But the might is still thine," said the Angel of Christmas; "the might and not the rest. Let the snow lie warmly upon the young seed. Learn to bear it, that another receives homage while thou yet reignest. Learn to bear being forgotten while thou art yet alive. The hour of thy release will come when spring appears."

"And when will spring come?" asked Winter.

"It will come when the stork returns."

And with white locks and snowy beard, cold, bent, and hoary, but strong as the wintry storm, and firm as ice, old Winter sat on the snowy drift on the hill, looking towards the south, where he had before sat and gazed. The ice cracked, the snow creaked, the skaters skimmed to and fro on the smooth lakes, ravens and crows contrasted picturesquely with the white ground, and not a breath of wind stirred. And in the quiet air old Winter clenched his fists, and the ice was fathoms thick between land and land.

Then the sparrows came again out of the town, and asked, "Who is that old man yonder?" And the raven sat there again, or a son of his, which comes to quite the same thing, and answered them and said, "It is Winter, the old man of last year. He is not dead, as the almanack says, but he is the guardian of Spring, who is coming."

"When will spring come?" asked the sparrows. "Then we shall have good times, and a better rule. The old one was worth nothing."

And Winter nodded in quiet thought at the leafless forest, where every tree showed the graceful form and bend of its twigs; and during the winter sleep the icy mists of the clouds came down, and the ruler dreamed of his youthful days, and of the time of his manhood; and towards the morning dawn the whole wood was clothed in glittering hoar frost. That was the summer dream of winter, and the sun scattered the hoar frost from the boughs.

"When will spring come?" asked the sparrows.

"The spring!" sounded like an echo from the hills on which the snow lay. The sun shone warmer, the snow melted, and the birds twittered, "Spring is coming!"

And aloft through the air came the first stork, and the second followed him. A lovely child sat on the back of each, and they alighted on the field, kissed the earth, and kissed the old silent man, and he disappeared, shrouded in the cloudy mist. And the story of the year was done.

"That is all very well," said the sparrows; "it is very beautiful too, but it is not according to the almanack, and therefore it is irregular."

SHE WAS GOOD FOR NOTHING.

The mayor stood at the open window. His shirt-frill was very fine, and so were his ruffles; he had a breast-pin stuck in his frill, and was uncommonly smooth-shaven—all his own work; certainly he had given himself a slight cut, but he had stuck a bit of newspaper on the place. "Hark 'ee, youngster!" he cried.

The youngster in question was no other than the son of the poor washerwoman, who was just going past the house; and he pulled off his cap respectfully. The peak of the said cap was broken in the middle, for the cap was arranged so that it could be rolled up and crammed into

THE MAYOR AND THE WASHERWOMAN'S SON.

his pocket. In his poor, but clean and well-mended attire, with heavy wooden shoes on his feet, the boy stood there, as humble and abashed as if he stood opposite the king himself.

"You're a good boy," said Mr. Mayor. "You're a civil boy. I

suppose your mother is rinsing clothes down yonder in the river? I suppose you are to carry that thing to your mother that you have in your pocket? That's a bad affair with your mother. How much have you got in it?"

"Half a quartern," stammered the boy, in a frightened voice.

"And this morning she had just as much," the mayor continued.

"No," replied the boy, "it was yesterday."

"Two halves make a whole. She's good for nothing! It's a sad thing with that kind of people! Tell your mother that she ought to be ashamed of herself; and mind you don't become a drunkard—but you will become one, though. Poor child—there, go!"

Accordingly the boy went on his way. He kept his cap in his hand, and the wind played with his yellow hair, so that great locks of it stood up straight. He turned down by the street corner, into the little lane that led to the river, where his mother stood by the washing bench, beating the heavy linen with the mallet. The water rolled quickly along, for the flood-gates at the mill had been drawn up, and the sheets were caught by the stream, and threatened to overturn the bench. The washerwoman was obliged to lean against the bench, to support it.

"I was very nearly sailing away," she said. "It is a good thing that you are come, for I have need to recruit my strength a little. For six hours I've been standing in the water. Have you brought anything for me?"

The boy produced the bottle, and the mother put it to her mouth, and took a little.

"Ah, how that revives one!" she said: "how it warms! It is as good as a hot meal, and not so dear. And you, my boy! you look quite pale. You are shivering in your thin clothes—to be sure it is autumn. Ugh! now cold the water is! I hope I shall not be ill. But no, I shall not be that! Give me a little more, and you may have a sip too, but only a little sip, for you must not accustom yourself to it, my poor dear child!"

And she stepped up to the bridge on which the boy stood, and came ashore. The water dripped from the straw matting she had wound round her, and from her gown.

"I work and toil as much as ever I can," she said, "but I do it willingly, if I can only manage to bring you up honestly and well, my boy."

As she spoke, a somewhat older woman came towards them. She was poor enough to behold, lame of one leg, and with a large false curl hanging down over one of her eyes, which was a blind one. The curl was intended to cover the eye, but it only made the defect more striking.

This was a friend of the laundress. She was called among the neighbours, "Lame Martha with the curl."

"Oh, you poor thing! How you work, standing there in the water!" cried the visitor. "You really require something to warm you; and yet malicious folks cry out about the few drops you take!" And in a few minutes' time the mayor's late speech was reported to the laundress; for Martha had heard it all, and she had been angry that a man could speak as he had done to a woman's own child, about the few drops the mother took: and she was the more angry, because the mayor on that very day was giving a great feast, at which wine was drunk by the bottle—good wine, strong wine. "A good many will take more than they need—but that's not called drinking. *They* are good; but *you* are good for nothing!" cried Martha, indignantly.

"Ah, so he spoke to you, my child?" said the washerwoman; and her lips trembled as she spoke. "So he says you have a mother who is good for nothing? Well, perhaps he's right, but he should not have said it to the child. Still, I have had much misfortune from that house."

"You were in service there when the mayor's parents were alive, and lived in that house. That is many years ago: many bushels of salt have been eaten since then, and we may well be thirsty;" and Martha smiled. "The mayor has a great dinner party to-day. The guests were to have been put off, but it was too late, and the dinner was already cooked. The footman told me about it. A letter came a little while ago, to say that the younger brother had died in Copenhagen."

"Died!" repeated the laundress—and she became pale as death.

"Yes, certainly," said Martha. "Do you take that so much to heart? Well, you must have known him years ago, when you were in service in the house."

"Is he dead? He was such a good, worthy man! There are not many like him." And the tears rolled down her cheeks. "Good heavens! everything is whirling around me—it was too much for me. I feel quite ill." And she leaned against the plank.

"Good heavens, you are ill indeed!" exclaimed the other woman. "Come, come, it will pass over presently. But no, you really look seriously ill. The best thing will be for me to lead you home."

"But my linen yonder—"

"I will take care of that. Come, give me your arm. The boy can stay here and take care of it, and I'll come back and finish the washing; that's only a trifle."

The laundress's limbs shook under her. "I have stood too long in the cold water," she said faintly, "and I have eaten and drunk nothing

since this morning. The fever is in my bones. O kind Heaven, help me to get home! My poor child!" and she burst into tears. The boy wept too, and soon he was sitting alone by the river, beside the damp linen. The two women could make only slow progress. The laundress dragged her weary limbs along, and tottered through the lane and round the corner into the street where stood the house of the mayor; and just in front of his mansion she sank down on the pavement. Many people assembled round her, and Lame Martha ran into the house to get help. The mayor and his guests came to the window.

"That's the washerwoman!" he said. "She has taken a glass too much. She is good for nothing. It's a pity for the pretty son she has. I really like the child very well; but the mother is good for nothing."

Presently the laundress came to herself, and they led her into her poor dwelling, and put her to bed. Kind Martha heated a mug of beer for her, with butter and sugar, which she considered the best medicine; and then she hastened to the river, and rinsed the linen—badly enough, though her will was good. Strictly speaking, she drew it ashore, wet as it was, and laid it in a basket.

Towards evening she was sitting in the poor little room with the laundress. The mayor's cook had given her some roasted potatoes and a fine fat piece of ham, for the sick woman, and Martha and the boy discussed these viands while the patient enjoyed the smell, which she pronounced very nourishing.

And presently the boy was put to bed, in the same bed in which his mother lay; but he slept at her feet, covered with an old quilt made up of blue and white patches.

Soon the patient felt a little better. The warm beer had strengthened her, and the fragrance of the provisions pleased her also. "Thanks, you kind soul," she said to Martha. "I will tell you all when the boy is asleep. I think he has dropped off already. How gentle and good he looks, as he lies there with his eyes closed. He does not know what his mother has suffered, and Heaven grant he may never know it. I was in service at the councillor's, the father of the mayor. It happened that the youngest of the sons, the student, came home. I was young then, a wild girl, but honest, that I may declare in the face of Heaven. The student was merry and kind, good and brave. Every drop of blood in him was good and honest. I have not seen a better man on this earth. He was the son of the house, and I was only a maid, but we formed an attachment to each other, honestly and honourably. And he told his mother of it, for she was in his eyes as a Deity on earth; and she was wise and gentle. He went away on a journey, but before he started he

put his gold ring on my finger; and directly he was gone my mistress called me. With a firm yet gentle seriousness she spoke to me, and it seemed as if Wisdom itself were speaking. She showed me clearly, in spirit and in truth, the difference there was between him and me.

"'Now he is charmed with your pretty appearance,' she said, 'but your good looks will leave you. You have not been educated as he has. You are not equals in mind, and there is the misfortune. I respect the poor,' she continued; 'in the sight of God they may occupy a higher place than many a rich man can fill; but here on earth we must beware of entering a false track as we go onward, or our carriage is upset, and we are thrown into the road. I know that a worthy man wishes to marry you—an artisan—I mean Erich the glovemaker. He is a widower without children, and is well to do. Think it over.'

"Every word she spoke cut into my heart like a knife, but I knew that my mistress was right, and that knowledge weighed heavily upon me. I kissed her hand, and wept bitter tears, and I wept still more when I went into my room and threw myself on my bed. It was a heavy night that I had to pass through. Heaven knows what I suffered and how I wrestled! The next Sunday I went to the Lord's house, to pray for strength and guidance. It seemed like a Providence, that as I stepped out of church Erich came towards me. And now there was no longer a doubt in my mind. We were suited to each other in rank and in means, and he was even then a thriving man. Therefore I went up to him, took his hand, and said, 'Are you still of the same mind towards me?' 'Yes, ever and always,' he replied. 'Will you marry a girl who honours and respects, but who does not love you—though that may come later?' I asked again. 'Yes, it will come!' he answered; and upon this we joined hands. I went home to my mistress. I wore the gold ring that the son had given me at my heart. I could not put it on my finger in the daytime, but only in the evening when I went to bed. I kissed the ring again and again, till my lips almost bled, and then I gave it to my mistress, and told her the banns were to be put up next week for me and the glovemaker. Then my mistress put her arms round me and kissed me. *She* did not say that I was good for nothing; but perhaps I was better then than I am now, though the misfortunes of life had not yet found me out. In a few weeks we were married; and for the first year the world went well with us: we had a journeyman and an apprentice, and you, Martha, lived with us as our servant."

"Oh, you were a dear, good mistress," cried Martha. "Never shall I forget how kind you and your husband were!"

"Yes, those were our good years, when you were with us. We had

not any children yet. The student I never saw again.—Yes, though, I saw him, but he did not see me. He was here at his mother's funeral. I saw him stand by the grave. He was pale as death, and very downcast, but that was for his mother; afterwards, when his father died, he was away in a foreign land, and did not come back hither. I know that he never married; I believe he became a lawyer. He had forgotten me; and even if he had seen me again, he would not have known me, I look so ugly. And that is very fortunate."

And then she spoke of her days of trial, and told how misfortune had come as it were swooping down upon them.

"We had five hundred dollars," she said; "and as there was a house in the street to be bought for two hundred, and it would pay to pull it down and build a new one, it was bought. The builder and carpenter calculated the expense, and the new house was to cost ten hundred and twenty. Erich had credit, and borrowed the money in the chief town, but the captain who was to bring it was shipwrecked, and the money was lost with him.

"Just at that time my dear sweet boy who is sleeping yonder was born. My husband was struck down by a long heavy illness: for three quarters of a year I was compelled to dress and undress him. We went back more and more, and fell into debt. All that we had was sold, and my husband died. I have worked, and toiled, and striven, for the sake of the child, and scrubbed staircases, washed linen, clean and coarse alike, but I was not to be better off, such was God's good will. But He will take me to Himself in His own good time, and will not forsake my boy." And she fell asleep.

Towards morning she felt much refreshed, and strong enough, as she thought, to go back to her work. She had just stepped again into the cold water, when a trembling and faintness seized her: she clutched at the air with her hand, took a step forward, and fell down. Her head rested on the bank, and her feet were still in the water: her wooden shoes, with a wisp of straw in each, which she had worn, floated down the stream, and thus Martha found her on coming to bring her some coffee.

In the meantime a messenger from the mayor's house had been dispatched to her poor lodging to tell her "to come to the mayor immediately, for he had something to tell her." It was too late! A barber-surgeon was brought to open a vein in her arm; but the poor woman was dead.

"She has drunk herself to death!" said the mayor.

In the letter that brought the news of his brother's death, the

contents of the will had been mentioned, and it was a legacy of six hundred dollars to the glovemaker's widow, who had once been his mother's maid. The money was to be paid, according to the mayor's discretion, in larger or smaller sums, to her or to her child.

"There was some fuss between my brother and her," said the mayor. "It 's a good thing that she is dead; for now the boy will have the whole, and I will get him into a house among respectable people. He may turn out a reputable working man."

And Heaven gave its blessing to these words.

So the mayor sent for the boy, promised to take care of him, and added that it was a good thing the lad's mother was dead, inasmuch as she had been good for nothing.

They bore her to the churchyard, to the cemetery of the poor, and Martha strewed sand upon her grave, and planted a rose tree upon it, and the boy stood beside her.

"My dear mother!" he cried, as the tears fell fast. "Is it true what they said: that she was good for nothing?" "No, she was good for much!" replied the old servant, and she looked up indignantly. "I knew it many a year ago, and more than all since last night. I tell you she was worth much, and the Lord in heaven knows it is true, let the world say as much as it chooses, 'She was good for nothing.'"

"THERE IS A DIFFERENCE."

It was in the month of May. The wind still blew cold, but bushes and trees, field and meadow, all alike said the spring had come. There was store of flowers even in the wild hedges; and there spring carried on his affairs, and preached from a little apple tree, where one branch hung fresh and blooming, covered with delicate pink blossoms that were just ready to open. The apple tree branch knew well enough how beautiful he was, for the knowledge is inherent in the leaf as well as in the blood; and consequently the branch was not surprised when a nobleman's carriage stopped opposite to him on the road, and the young countess said that an apple branch was the loveliest thing one could behold, a very emblem of spring in its most charming form. And the branch was most carefully broken off, and she held it in her delicate

hand, and sheltered it with her silk parasol. Then they drove to the castle, where there were lofty halls and splendid apartments. Pure white curtains fluttered round the open windows, and beautiful flowers stood in shining transparent vases; and in one of these, which looked as if it had been cut out of fresh-fallen snow, the apple branch was placed among some fresh light twigs of beech. It was charming to behold.

But the branch became proud; and this was quite like human nature.

People of various kinds came through the room, and according to their rank they might express their admiration. A few said nothing at all, and others again said too much, and the apple tree branch soon got to understand that there was a difference among plants. "Some are created for beauty, and some for use; and there are some which one can do without altogether," thought the apple branch; and as he stood just in front of the open window, from whence he could see into the garden and across the fields, he had flowers and plants enough to contemplate and to think about, for there were rich plants and humble plants—some very humble indeed.

"Poor despised herbs!" said the apple branch. "There is certainly a difference! And how unhappy they must feel, if indeed that kind *can* feel like myself and my equals. Certainly there is a difference, and distinctions must be made, or we should all be equal."

And the apple branch looked down with a species of pity, especially upon a certain kind of flower of which great numbers are found in the fields and in ditches. No one bound them into a nosegay, they were too common; for they might be found even among the paving-stones, shooting up everywhere like the rankest weeds, and they had the ugly name of "dandelion," or "dog-flower."

"Poor despised plants!" said the apple branch. "It is not your fault that you received the ugly name you bear. But it is with plants as with men—there must be a difference!"

"A difference?" said the sunbeam; and he kissed the blooming apple branch, and saluted in like manner the yellow dandelions out in the field —all the brothers of the sunbeam kissed them, the poor flowers as well as the rich.

Now the apple branch had never thought of the boundless beneficence of Providence in creation towards everything that lives and moves and has its being; he had never thought how much that is beautiful and good may be hidden, but not forgotten; but that, too, was quite like human nature.

The sunbeam, the ray of light, knew better; and said, "You don't

see far, and you don't see clearly. What is the despised plant that you especially pity?"

"The dandelion," replied the apple branch. "It is never received into a nosegay; it is trodden under foot. There are too many of them; and when they run to seed, they fly away like little pieces of wool over the roads, and hang and cling to people's dress. They are nothing but

THE CHILDREN AND THE DANDELIONS.

weeds—but it is right there should be weeds too. Oh, I'm really very thankful that I was not created one of those flowers."

But there came across the fields a whole troop of children; the youngest of whom was so small that it was carried by the rest, and when it was set down in the grass among the yellow flowers it laughed aloud with glee, kicked out with its little legs, rolled about and plucked the yellow flowers, and kissed them in its pretty innocence. The elder children broke off the flowers with their tall stalks, and bent the stalks

round into one another, link by link, so that a whole chain was made; first a necklace, and then a scarf to hang over their shoulders and tie round their waists, and then a chaplet to wear on the head: it was quite a gala of green links and yellow flowers. The eldest children carefully gathered the stalks on which hung the white feathery ball, formed by the flower that had run to seed; and this loose, airy wool-flower, which is a beautiful object, looking like the finest snowy down, they held to their mouths, and tried to blow away the whole head at one breath: for their grandmother had said that whoever could do this would be sure to get new clothes before the year was out. So on this occasion the despised flower was actually raised to the rank of a prophet or augur.

"Do you see?" said the sunbeam. "Do you see the beauty of those flowers? do you see their power?"

"Yes, over children," replied the apple branch.

And now an old woman came into the field, and began to dig with a blunt shaftless knife round the root of the dandelion plant, and pulled it up out of the ground. With some of the roots she intended to make tea for herself; others she was going to sell for money to the druggist.

"But beauty is a higher thing!" said the apple tree branch. "Only the chosen few can be admitted into the realm of beauty. There is a difference among plants, just as there is a difference among men."

And then the sunbeam spoke of the boundless love of the Creator, as manifested in the creation, and of the just distribution of things in time and in eternity.

"Yes, yes, that is your opinion," the apple branch persisted.

But now some people came into the room, and the beautiful young countess appeared, the lady who had placed the apple branch in the transparent vase in the sunlight. She carried in her hand a flower, or something of the kind. The object, whatever it might be, was hidden by three or four great leaves, wrapped around it like a shield, that no draught or gust of wind should injure it; and it was carried more carefully than the apple bough had ever been. Very gently the large leaves were now removed, and lo, there appeared the fine feathery seed crown of the despised dandelion! This it was that the lady had plucked with the greatest care, and had carried home with every precaution, so that not one of the delicate feathery darts that form its downy ball should be blown away. She now produced it, quite uninjured, and admired its beautiful form, its peculiar construction, and its airy beauty, which was to be scattered by the wind.

"Look, with what singular beauty Providence has invested it," she said. "I will paint it, together with the apple branch, whose beauty all have admired; but this humble flower has received just as much from Heaven in a different way; and, various as they are, both are children of the kingdom of beauty."

And the sunbeam kissed the humble flower, and he kissed the blooming apple branch, whose leaves appeared covered with a roseate blush.

EVERYTHING IN ITS RIGHT PLACE.

It is more than a hundred years ago.

Behind the wood, by the great lake, stood the old baronial mansion. Round about it lay a deep moat, in which grew reeds and grass. Close by the bridge, near the entrance-gate, rose an old willow tree that bent over the reeds.

Up from the hollow lane sounded the clang of horns and the trampling of horses; therefore the little girl who kept the geese hastened to drive her charges away from the bridge, before the hunting company should come galloping up. They drew near with such speed that the girl was obliged to climb up in a hurry, and perch herself on the coping-stone of the bridge, lest she should be ridden down. She was still half a child, and had a pretty light figure, and a gentle expression in her face, with two clear blue eyes. The noble baron took no note of this, but as he gallopped past the little goose-herd, he reversed the whip he held in his hand, and in rough sport gave her such a push in the chest with the butt-end, that she fell backwards into the ditch.

"Everything in its place," he cried; "into the puddle with you!" And he laughed aloud, for this was intended for wit, and the company joined in his mirth: the whole party shouted and clamoured, and the dogs barked their loudest.

Fortunately for herself, the poor girl in falling seized one of the hanging branches of the willow tree, by means of which she kept herself suspended over the muddy water, and as soon as the baron and his company had disappeared through the castle-gate, the girl tried to scramble up again; but the bough broke off at the top, and she would have fallen backward among the reeds, if a strong hand from above had

not at that moment seized her. It was the hand of a pedlar, who had seen from a short distance what had happened, and who now hurried up to give aid.

"Everything in its right place," he said, mimicking the gracious baron; and he drew the little maiden up to the firm ground. He would have restored the broken branch to the place from which it had been torn, but "everything in its place" cannot always be managed, and therefore he stuck the piece in the ground. "Grow and prosper till you can furnish a good flute for them up yonder," he said; for he would have liked to play the "rogue's march" for my lord the baron, and my lord's whole family. And then he betook himself to the castle, but not into the ancestral hall, he was too humble for that! He went to the servants' quarters, and the men and maids turned over his stock of goods, and bargained with him; and from above, where the guests were at table, came a sound of roaring and screaming that was intended for song, and indeed they did their best. Loud laughter, mingled with the barking and howling of dogs, sounded through the windows, for there was feasting and carousing up yonder. Wine and strong old ale foamed in the jugs and glasses, and the dogs sat with their masters and dined with them. They had the pedlar summoned upstairs, but only to make fun of him. The wine had mounted into their heads, and the sense had flown out. They poured wine into a stocking, that the pedlar might drink with them, but that he must drink quickly; that was considered a rare jest, and was a cause of fresh laughter. And then whole farms, with oxen and peasants too, were staked on a card, and won and lost.

"Everything in its right place!" said the pedlar, when he had at last made his escape out of what he called "the Sodom and Gomorrah up yonder." "The open high-road is my right place," he said; "I did not feel at all happy there." And the little maiden who sat keeping the geese nodded at him in a friendly way, as he strode along beside the hedges.

And days and weeks went by; and it became manifest that the willow branch which the pedlar had stuck into the ground by the castle moat remained fresh and green, and even brought forth new twigs. The little goose-girl saw that the branch must have taken root, and rejoiced greatly at the circumstance; for this tree, she said, was now her tree.

The tree certainly came forward well; but everything else belonging to the castle went very rapidly back, what with feasting and gambling—for these two things are like wheels, upon which no man can stand securely.

Six years had not passed away before the noble lord passed out of the

castle-gate, a beggared man, and the mansion was bought by a rich dealer; and this purchaser was the very man who had once been made a jest of there, for whom wine had been poured into a stocking; but honesty and industry are good winds to speed a vessel; and now the dealer was possessor of the baronial estate. But from that hour no more card-playing was permitted there. "That is bad reading," said he: "when the Evil One saw a Bible for the first time, he wanted to put a bad book against it, and invented card-playing."

The new proprietor took a wife; and who might that be but the goose-girl, who had always been faithful and good, and looked as beautiful and fine in her new clothes as if she had been born a great lady. And how did all this come about? That is too long a story for our busy time, but it really happened, and the most important part is to come.

It was a good thing now to be in the old mansion. The mother managed the domestic affairs, and the father superintended the estate, and it seemed as if blessings were streaming down. Where rectitude enters in, prosperity is sure to follow. The old house was cleaned and painted, the ditches were cleared and fruit trees planted. Everything wore a bright cheerful look, and the floors were as polished as a draught board. In the long winter evenings the lady sat at the spinning-wheel with her maids, and every Sunday evening there was a reading from the Bible, by the Councillor of Justice himself—this title the dealer had gained, though it was only in his old age. The children grew up—for children had come—and they received the best education, though all had not equal abilities, as we find indeed in all families.

In the meantime the willow branch at the castle-gate had grown to be a splendid tree, which stood there free and self-sustained. "That is our genealogical tree," the old people said, and the tree was to be honoured and respected—so they told all the children, even those who had not very good heads.

And a hundred years rolled by.

It was in our own time. The lake had been converted to moorland, and the old mansion had almost disappeared. A pool of water and the ruins of some walls, this was all that was left of the old baronial castle, with its deep moat; and here stood also a magnificent old willow, with pendent boughs, which seemed to show how beautiful a tree may be if left to itself. The main stem was certainly split from the root to the crown, and the storm had bowed the noble tree a little; but it stood firm for all that, and from every cleft into which wind and weather had carried a portion of earth, grasses and flowers sprang forth: especially

near the top, where the great branches parted, a sort of hanging garden had been formed of wild raspberry bush, and even a small quantity of mistletoe had taken root, and stood, slender and graceful, in the midst of the old willow which was mirrored in the dark water. A field-path led close by the old tree.

High by the forest hill, with a splendid prospect in every direction, stood the new baronial hall, large and magnificent, with panes of glass so clearly transparent, that it looked as if there were no panes there at all. The grand flight of steps that led to the entrance looked like a bower of roses and broad-leaved plants. The lawn was as freshly green as if each separate blade of grass were cleaned morning and evening. In the hall hung costly pictures; silken chairs and sofas stood there, so easy that they looked almost as if they could run by themselves; there were tables of great marble slabs, and books bound in morocco and gold. Yes, truly, wealthy people lived here, people of rank: the baron with his family.

All things here corresponded with each other. The motto was still "Everything in its right place;" and therefore all the pictures which had been put up in the old house for honour and glory, hung now in the passage that led to the servants' hall: they were considered as old lumber, and especially two old portraits, one representing a man in a pink coat and powdered wig, the other a lady with powdered hair and holding a rose in her hand, and each surrounded with a wreath of willow leaves. These two pictures were pierced with many holes, because the little barons were in the habit of setting up the old people as a mark for their cross-bows. The pictures represented the Councillor of Justice and his lady, the founders of the present family.

"But they did not properly belong to our family," said one of the little barons. "He was a dealer, and she had kept the geese. They were not like papa and mamma."

The pictures were pronounced to be worthless; and as the motto was "Everything in its right place," the great-grandmother and great-grandfather had been sent into the passage that led to the servants' hall.

The son of the neighbouring clergyman was tutor in the great house. One day he was out walking with his pupils, the little barons and their eldest sister, who had just been confirmed; they came along the field-path, past the old willow, and as they walked on the young lady bound a wreath of field flowers, "Everything in its right place," and the flowers formed a pretty whole. At the same time she heard every word that was spoken, and she liked to hear the clergyman's son talk of the power of nature and of the great men and women in history. She had a good

THE OLD WILLOW TREE.

hearty disposition, with true nobility of thought and soul, and a heart full of love for all that God hath created.

The party came to a halt at the old willow tree. The youngest baron insisted on having such a flute cut for him from it as he had had made of other willows. Accordingly the tutor broke off a branch.

"Oh, don't do that!" cried the young baroness; but it was done already. "That is our famous old tree," she continued, "and I love it dearly. They laugh at me at home for this, but I don't mind. There is a story attached to this tree."

And she told what we all know about the tree, about the old mansion, the pedlar and the goose-girl, who had met for the first time in this spot, and had afterwards become the founders of the noble family to which the young barons belonged.

"They would not be ennobled, the good old folks!" she said. "They kept to the motto 'Everything in its right place;' and accordingly they thought it would be out of place for them to purchase a title with money. My grandfather, the first baron, was their son: he is said to have been a very learned man, very popular with princes and princesses, and a frequent guest at the court festivals. The others at home love him best; but, I don't know how, there seems to me something about that first pair that draws my heart towards them. How comfortable, how patriarchal it must have been in the old house, where the mistress sat at the spinning-wheel among her maids, and the old master read aloud from the Bible!"

"They were charming, sensible people," said the clergyman's son; and with this the conversation naturally fell upon nobles and citizens. The young man scarcely seemed to belong to the citizen class, so well did he speak concerning the purpose and meaning of nobility. He said,

"It is a great thing to belong to a family that has distinguished itself, and thus to have, as it were, in one's blood, a spur that urges one on to make progress in all that is good. It is delightful to have a name that serves as a card of admission into the highest circles. Nobility means that which is great and noble: it is a coin that has received a stamp to indicate what it is worth. It is the fallacy of the time, and many poets have frequently maintained this fallacy, that nobility of birth is accompanied by foolishness, and that the lower you go among the poor, the more does everything around shine. But that is not my view, for I consider it entirely false. In the higher classes many beautiful and kindly traits are found. My mother told me one of this kind, and I could tell you many others.

"My mother was on a visit to a great family in town. My grandmother, I think, had been housekeeper to the count's mother. The great nobleman and my mother were alone in the room, when the former noticed that an old woman came limping on crutches into the court-yard. Indeed, she was accustomed to come every Sunday, and carry away a gift with her. 'Ah, there is the poor old lady,' said the nobleman: 'walking is a great toil to her;' and before my mother understood what he meant, he had gone out of the room and run down the stairs, to save the old woman the toilsome walk, by carrying to her the gift she had come to receive.

"Now, that was only a small circumstance, but, like the widow's two mites in the Scripture, it has a sound that finds an echo in the depths of the heart in human nature; and these are the things the poet should show and point out; especially in these times should he sing of it, for that does good, and pacifies and unites men. But where a bit of mortality, because it has a genealogical tree and a coat of arms, rears up like an Arabian horse, and prances in the street, and says in the room, 'People out of the street have been here,' when a commoner has been —that is nobility in decay, and become a mere mask—a mask of the kind that Thespis created; and people are glad when such an one is turned into satire."

This was the speech of the clergyman's son. It was certainly rather long, but then the flute was being finished while he made it.

At the castle there was a great company. Many guests came from the neighbourhood and from the capital. Many ladies, some tastefully, and others tastelessly dressed, were there, and the great hall was quite full of people. The clergymen from the neighbourhood stood respectfully congregated in a corner, which made it look almost as if there were to be a burial there. But it was not so, for this was a party of pleasure, only that the pleasure had not yet begun.

A great concert was to be performed, and consequently the little baron had brought in his willow flute; but he could not get a note out of it, nor could his papa, and therefore the flute was worth nothing. There was instrumental music and song, both of the kind that delight the performers most—quite charming!

"You are a performer?" said a cavalier—his father's son and nothing else—to the tutor. "You play the flute and make it too—that 's genius. That should command, and should have the place of honour!"

"No indeed," replied the young man, "I only advance with the times, as every one is obliged to do."

"Oh, you will enchant us with the little instrument, will you not?" And with these words he handed to the clergyman's son the flute cut from the willow tree by the pool, and announced aloud that the tutor was about to perform a solo on that instrument.

Now, they only wanted to make fun of him, that was easily seen; and therefore the tutor would not play, though indeed he could do so very well; but they crowded round him and importuned him so strongly, that at last he took the flute and put it to his lips.

That was a wonderful flute! A sound, as sustained as that which is emitted by the whistle of a steam engine, and much stronger, echoed far over courtyard, garden, and wood, miles away into the country; and

simultaneously with the tone came a rushing wind that roared, "Everything in its right place!" And papa flew as if carried by the wind straight out of the hall and into the shepherd's cot; and the shepherd flew, not into the hall, for there he could not come—no, but into the room of the servants, among the smart lacqueys who strutted about there in silk stockings; and the proud servants were struck motionless with horror at the thought that such a personage dared to sit down to table with them.

But in the hall the young baroness flew up to the place of honour at the top of the table, where she was worthy to sit; and the young clergyman's son had a seat next to her; and there the two sat as if they were a newly-married pair. An old count of one of the most ancient families in the country remained untouched in his place of honour; for the flute was just, as men ought to be. The witty cavalier, the son of his father and nothing else, who had been the cause of the flute-playing, flew head-over-heels into the poultry-house—but not alone.

For a whole mile round about the sounds of the flute were heard, and singular events took place. A rich banker's family, driving along in a coach and four, was blown quite out of the carriage, and could not even find a place on the footboard at the back. Two rich peasants who in our times had grown too high for their corn-fields, were tumbled into the ditch. It was a dangerous flute, that: luckily, it burst at the first note, and that was a good thing, for then it was put back into the owner's pocket. "Everything in its right place."

The day afterwards not a word was said about this marvellous event; and thence has come the expression "pocketing the flute." Everything was in its usual order, only that the two old portraits of the dealer and the goose-girl hung on the wall in the banqueting hall. They had been blown up yonder, and as one of the real connoisseurs said they had been painted by a master's hand, they remained where they were, and were restored. "Everything in its right place."

And to that it will come; for *hereafter* is long—longer than this story.

THE GOBLIN AND THE HUCKSTER.

THERE was once a regular student: he lived in a garret, and nothing at all belonged to him; but there was also once a regular huckster: he lived on the ground floor, and the whole house was his; and the goblin

THE STUDENT'S BARGAIN.

kept with him, for on the huckster's table on Christmas Eve there was always a dish of plum porridge, with a great piece of butter floating in the middle. The huckster could accomplish that; and consequently the goblin stuck to the huckster's shop, and that was very interesting.

One evening the student came through the back door to buy candles and cheese for himself. He had no one to send, and that's why he came himself. He procured what he wanted and paid for it, and the huckster and his wife both nodded a "good evening" to him; and the woman was one who could do more than merely nod—she had an immense power of tongue! And the student nodded too, and then suddenly

stood still, reading the sheet of paper in which the cheese had been wrapped. It was a leaf torn out of an old book, a book that ought not to have been torn up, a book that was full of poetry.

"Yonder lies some more of the same sort," said the huckster: "I gave an old woman a little coffee for the books; give me two groschen, and you shall have the remainder."

"Yes," said the student, "give me the book instead of the cheese: I can eat my bread and butter without cheese. It would be a sin to tear the book up entirely. You are a capital man, a practical man, but you understand no more about poetry than does that cask yonder."

Now, that was an insulting speech, especially towards the cask; but the huckster laughed and the student laughed, for it was only said in fun. But the goblin was angry that any one should dare to say such things to a huckster who lived in his own house and sold the best butter.

When it was night, and the shop was closed and all were in bed, the goblin came forth, went into the bedroom, and took away the good lady's tongue; for she did not want that while she was asleep; and whenever he put this tongue upon any object in the room, the said object acquired speech and language, and could express its thoughts and feelings as well as the lady herself could have done; but only one object could use it at a time, and that was a good thing, otherwise they would have interrupted each other.

And the goblin laid the tongue upon the cask in which the old newspapers were lying.

"Is it true," he asked, "that you don't know what poetry means?"

"Of course I know it," replied the cask: "poetry is something that always stands at the foot of a column in the newspapers, and is sometimes cut out. I dare swear I have more of it in me than the student, and I'm only a poor tub compared to the huckster."

Then the goblin put the tongue upon the coffee-mill, and, mercy! how it began to go! And he put it upon the butter-cask, and on the cash-box: they were all of the waste-paper cask's opinion, and the opinion of the majority must be respected.

"Now I shall tell it to the student!" And with these words the goblin went quite quietly up the back stairs to the garret, where the student lived. The student had still a candle burning, and the goblin peeped through the keyhole, and saw that he was reading in the torn book that he had carried up out of the shop downstairs.

But how light it was in his room! Out of the book shot a clear beam, expanding into a thick stem, and into a mighty tree, which grew

upward and spread its branches far over the student. Each leaf was fresh, and every blossom was a beautiful female head, some with dark sparkling eyes, others with wonderfully clear blue orbs; every fruit was a gleaming star, and there was a glorious sound of song in the student's room.

Never had the little goblin imagined such splendour, far less had he ever seen or heard anything like it. He stood still on tiptoe, and peeped in till the light went out in the student's garret. Probably the student blew it out, and went to bed; but the little goblin remained standing there nevertheless, for the music still sounded on, soft and beautiful—a splendid cradle song for the student who had lain down to rest.

"This is an incomparable place," said the goblin: "I never expected such a thing! I should like to stay here with the student." And then the little man thought it over—and he was a sensible little man too—but he sighed, "The student has no porridge!" And then he went down again to the huckster's shop: and it was a very good thing that he got down there again at last, for the cask had almost worn out the good woman's tongue, for it had spoken out at one side everything that was contained in it, and was just about turning itself over, to give it out from the other side also, when the goblin came in, and restored the tongue to its owner. But from that time forth the whole shop, from the cash-box down to the firewood, took its tone from the cask, and paid him such respect, and thought so much of him, that when the huckster afterwards read the critical articles on theatricals and art in the newspaper, they were all pursuaded the information came from the cask itself.

But the goblin could no longer sit quietly and contentedly listening to all the wisdom down there: so soon as the light glimmered from the garret in the evening he felt as if the rays were strong cables drawing him up, and he was obliged to go and peep through the keyhole; and there a feeling of greatness rolled around him, such as we feel beside the ever-heaving sea when the storm rushes over it, and he burst into tears! He did not know himself why he was weeping, but a peculiar feeling of pleasure mingled with his tears. How wonderfully glorious it must be to sit with the student under the same tree! But that might not be, he was obliged to be content with the view through the keyhole, and to be glad of that. There he stood on the cold landing-place, with the autumn wind blowing down from the loft-hole: it was cold, very cold; but the little mannikin only felt that when the light in the room was extinguished. and the tones in the tree died away. Ha!

then he shivered, and crept down again to his warm corner, where it was homely and comfortable.

And when Christmas came, and brought with it the porridge and the great lump of butter, why, then he thought the huckster the better man.

But in the middle of the night the goblin was awaked by a terrible tumult and beating against the window shutters. People rapped noisily without, and the watchman blew his horn, for a great fire had broken out—the whole street was full of smoke and flame. Was it in the house itself, or at a neighbour's? Where was it? Terror seized on all. The huckster's wife was so bewildered that she took her gold earrings out of her ears and put them in her pocket, that at any rate she might save something; the huckster ran for his share-papers; and the maid for her black silk mantilla, for she had found means to purchase one. Each one wanted to save the best thing they had; the goblin wanted to do the same thing, and in a few leaps he was up the stairs, and into the room of the student, who stood quite quietly at the open window, looking at the conflagration that was raging in the house of the neighbour opposite. The goblin seized upon the wonderful book which lay upon the table, popped it into his red cap, and held the cap tight with both hands. The great treasure of the house was saved; and now he ran up and away, quite on to the roof of the house, on to the chimney. There he sat, illuminated by the flames of the burning house opposite, both hands pressed tightly over his cap, in which the treasure lay; and now he knew the real feelings of his heart, and knew to whom it really belonged. But when the fire was extinguished, and the goblin could think calmly again, why, then . . . . . .

"I must divide myself between the two," he said; "I can't quite give up the huckster, because of the porridge!"

Now, that was spoken quite like a human creature. We all of us visit the huckster for the sake of the porridge.

IN A THOUSAND YEARS.

Yes, in a thousand years people will fly on the wings of steam through the air, over the ocean! The young inhabitants of America will become visitors of old Europe. They will come over to see the

monuments and the great cities, which will then be in ruins, just as we in our time make pilgrimages to the tottering splendours of Southern Asia. In a thousand years they will come!

The Thames, the Danube, and the Rhine still roll their course, Mont Blanc stands firm with its snow-capped summit, and the Northern Lights gleam over the lands of the North; but generation after generation has become dust, whole rows of the mighty of the moment are forgotten, like those who already slumber under the hill on which the rich trader whose ground it is has built a bench, on which he can sit and look out across his waving corn-fields.

"To Europe!" cry the young sons of America; "to the land of our ancestors, the glorious land of monuments and fancy—to Europe!"

The ship of the air comes. It is crowded with passengers, for the transit is quicker than by sea. The electro-magnetic wire under the ocean has already telegraphed the number of the aërial caravan. Europe is in sight: it is the coast of Ireland that they see, but the passengers are still asleep; they will not be called till they are exactly over England. There they will first step on European shore, in the land of Shakespeare as the educated call it; in the land of politics, the land of machines, as it is called by others.

Here they stay a whole day. That is all the time the busy race can devote to the whole of England and Scotland. Then the journey is continued through the tunnel under the English Channel, to France, the land of Charlemagne and Napoleon. Moliere is named: the learned men talk of the classic school of remote antiquity: there is rejoicing and shouting for the names of heroes, poets, and men of science, whom our time does not know, but who will be born after our time in Paris, the crater of Europe.

The air steamboat flies over the country whence Columbus went forth, where Cortez was born, and where Calderon sang dramas in sounding verse. Beautiful black-eyed women live still in the blooming valleys, and the oldest songs speak of the Cid and the Alhambra.

Then through the air, over the sea, to Italy, where once lay old, everlasting Rome. It has vanished! The Campagna lies desert: a single ruined wall is shown as the remains of St. Peter's, but there is a doubt if this ruin be genuine.

Next to Greece, to sleep a night in the grand hotel at the top of Mount Olympus, to say that they have been there; and the journey is continued to the Bosphorus, to rest there a few hours, and see the place where Byzantium lay; and where the legend tells that the harem stood in the time of the Turks, poor fishermen are now spreading their nets.

Over the remains of mighty cities on the broad Danube, cities which we in our time know not, the travellers pass; but here and there, on the rich sites of those that time shall bring forth, the caravan sometimes descends, and departs thence again.

Down below lies Germany, that was once covered with a close net of railways and canals, the region where Luther spoke, where Goethe sang, and Mozart once held the septre of harmony! Great names shine there, in science and in art, names that are unknown to us. One day devoted to seeing Germany, and one for the North, the country of Oersted and Linnæus, and for Norway, the land of the old heroes and the young Normans. Iceland is visited on the journey home: the geysers burn no more, Hecla is an extinct volcano, but the rocky island is still fixed in the midst of the foaming sea, a continual monument of legend and poetry.

"There is really a great deal to be seen in Europe," says the young American, "and we have seen it in a week, according to the directions of the great traveller" (and here he mentions the name of one of his contemporaries) "in his celebrated work, 'How to See all Europe in a Week.'"

THE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP.

We have just taken a little journey, and already we want to take a longer one. Whither? To Sparta, to Mycene, to Delphi? There are a hundred places at whose names the heart beats with the desire of travel. On horseback we go up the mountain paths, through brake and through brier. A single traveller makes an appearance like a whole caravan. He rides forward with his guide, a pack-horse carries trunks, a tent, and provisions, and a few armed soldiers follow as a guard. No inn with warm beds awaits him at the end of his tiring day's journey: the tent is often his dwelling-place. In the great wild region the guide cooks him a pillan of rice, fowls, and curry for his supper. A thousand gnats swarm round the tent. It is a boisterous night, and to-morrow the way will lead across swollen streams; take care you are not washed away!

What is your reward for undergoing these hardships? The fullest, richest reward. Nature manifests herself here in all her greatness; every spot is historical, and the eye and the thoughts are alike delighted. The

poet may sing it, the painter portray it in rich pictures; but the air of reality which sinks deep into the soul of the spectator, and remains there, neither painter nor poet can produce.

In many little sketches I have endeavoured to give an idea of a small part of Athens and its environs; but how colourless the picture seems! How little does it exhibit Greece, the mourning genius of beauty, whose greatness and whose sorrow the stranger never forgets!

The lonely herdsman yonder on the hills would, perhaps, by a simple recital of an event in his life, better enlighten the stranger who wishes in a few features to behold the land of the Hellenes, than any picture could do.

"Then," says my Muse, "let him speak." A custom, a good, peculiar custom, shall be the subject of the mountain shepherd's tale. It is called

THE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP.

Our rude house was put together of clay; but the door-posts were columns of fluted marble found near the spot where the house was erected. The roof reached almost down to the ground. It was now dark brown and ugly, but it had originally consisted of blooming olive and fresh laurel branches brought from beyond the mountain. Around our dwelling was a narrow gorge, whose walls of rock rose steeply upwards, and showed naked and black, and round their summits often hung clouds, like white living figures. Never did I hear a singing bird there, never did the men there dance to the sound of the bagpipe; but the spot was sacred from the old times: even its name reminded of this, for it was called Delphi! The dark solemn mountains were all covered with snow; the highest, which gleamed the longest in the red light of evening, was Parnassus; the brook which rolled from it near our house was once sacred also. Now the ass sullies it with its feet, but the stream rolls on and on, and becomes clear again. How I can remember every spot in the deep holy solitude! In the midst of the hut a fire was kindled, and when the hot ashes lay there red and glowing, the bread was baked in them. When the snow was piled so high around our hut as almost to hide it, my mother appeared most cheerful: then she would hold my head between her hands, and sing the songs she never sang at other times, for the Turks our masters would not allow it. She sang:

"On the summit of Olympus, in the forest of dwarf firs, lay an old stag. His eyes were heavy with tears; he wept blue and even red

tears; and there came a roebuck by, and said, 'What ails thee, that thou weepest those blue and red tears?' And the stag answered, 'The Turk has come to our city: he has wild dogs for the chase, a goodly pack.' 'I will drive them away across the islands,' cried the young roebuck, 'I will drive them away across the islands into the deep sea!' But before evening sank down the roebuck was slain, and before night the stag was hunted and dead."

And when my mother sang thus, her eyes became moist, and on the long eyelashes hung a tear; but she hid it, and baked our black bread in the ashes. Then I would clench my fist and cry, "We will kill the Turks!" but she repeated from the song the words, "I will drive them across the islands into the deep sea. But before evening sank down the roebuck was slain, and before the night came the stag was hunted and dead."

For several days and nights we had been lonely in our hut, when my father came home. I knew he would bring me shells from the Gulf of Lepanto, or perhaps even a bright gleaming knife. This time he brought us a child, a little half-naked girl, that he brought under his sheepskin cloak. It was wrapped in a fur, and all that the little creature possessed when this was taken off, and she lay in my mother's lap, were three silver coins, fastened in her dark hair. My father told us that the Turks had killed the child s parents; and he told so much about them, that I dreamed of the Turks all night. He himself had been wounded, and my mother bound up his arm. The wound was deep, and the thick sheepskin was stiff with frozen blood. The little maiden was to be my sister. How radiantly beautiful she looked! Even my mother's eyes were not more gentle than hers. Anastasia, as she was called, was to be my sister, because her father had been united to mine by the old custom which we still keep. They had sworn brotherhood in their youth, and chosen the most beautiful and virtuous girl in the neighbourhood to consecrate their bond of friendship. I often heard of the strange good custom.

So now the little girl was my sister. She sat in my lap, and I brought her flowers and the feathers of the mountain birds: we drank together of the waters of Parnassus, and dwelt together for many a year under the laurel roof of the hut, while my mother sang winter after winter of the stag who wept red tears. But as yet I did not understand that it was my own countrymen whose many sorrows were mirrored in those tears.

One day there came three Frankish men. Their dress was different from ours. They had tents and beds with them on their horses, and

more than twenty Turks, all armed with swords and muskets, accompanied them; for they were friends of the pacha, and had letters from him commanding an escort for them. They only came to see our mountains, to ascend Parnassus amid the snow and the clouds, and to look at the strange black steep rock near our hut. They could not find room in it, nor could they endure the smoke that rolled along the ceiling and found its way out at the low door; therefore they pitched

THE GREEK MOTHER'S SONG.

their tents on the small space outside our dwelling, roasted lambs and birds, and poured out strong sweet wine, of which the Turks were not allowed to partake.

When they departed, I accompanied them for some distance, carrying my little sister Anastasia, wrapped in a goatskin, on my back. One of the Frankish gentlemen made me stand in front of a rock, and drew me, and her too, as we stood there, so that we looked like one creature. I

never thought of it; but Anastasia and I were really one. She was always sitting in my lap or riding in the goatskin at my back; and when I dreamed, she appeared in my dreams.

Two nights afterwards, other men, armed with knives and muskets, came into our tent. They were Albanians, brave men, my mother told me. They only stayed a short time. My sister Anastasia sat on the knee of one of them, and when they were gone she had not three, but only two silver coins in her hair. They wrapped tobacco in strips of paper and smoked it. I remember they were undecided as to the road they were to take.

But they had to make a choice. They went, and my father went with them. Soon afterwards we heard the sound of firing. The noise was renewed, and soldiers rushed into our hut, and took my mother, and myself, and my sister Anastasia prisoners. They declared that the robbers had been entertained by us, and that my father had acted as the robbers' guide, and therefore we must go with them. Presently I saw the corpses of the robbers brought in; I saw my father's corpse too. I cried and cried till I fell asleep. When I awoke, we were in prison, but the room was not worse than ours in our own house. They gave me onions to eat, and musty wine poured from a tarry cask, but we had no better fare at home.

How long we were kept prisoners I do not know; but many days and nights went by. When we were set free it was the time of the holy Easter feast. I carried Anastasia on my back, for my mother was ill, and could only move slowly, and it was a long way till we came down to the sea, to the Gulf of Lepanto. We went into a church that gleamed with pictures painted on a golden ground. They were pictures of angels, and very beautiful; but it seemed to me that our little Anastasia was just as beautiful. In the middle of the floor stood a coffin filled with roses. "The Lord Christ is pictured there in the form of a beautiful rose," said my mother; and the priest announced, "Christ is risen!" All the people kissed each other: each one had a burning taper in his hand, and I received one myself, and so did little Anastasia. The bagpipes sounded, men danced hand in hand from the church, and outside the women were roasting the Easter lamb. We were invited to partake, and I sat by the fire; a boy, older than myself, put his arms round my neck, kissed me, and said, "Christ is risen!" and thus it was that for the first time I met Aphtanides.

My mother could make fishermen's nets, for which there was a good demand here in the bay, and we lived a long time by the side of the sea, the beautiful sea, that tasted like tears, and in its colours reminded me

of the song of the stag that wept—for sometimes its waters were red, and sometimes green or blue.

Aphtanides knew how to manage our boat, and I often sat in it, with my little Anastasia, while it glided on through the water, swift as a bird flying through the air. Then, when the sun sank down, the mountains were tinted with a deeper and deeper blue, one range seemed to rise

THE FRIENDS AT LEPANTO.

behind the other, and behind them all stood Parnassus with its snow-crowned summit. The mountain-top gleamed in the evening rays like glowing iron, and it seemed as though the light came from within it; for long after the sun had set, the mountain still shone through the clear blue air. The white water birds touched the surface of the sea with their wings, and all here was as calm and quiet as among the black rocks at Delphi. I lay on my back in the boat, Anastasia leaned against me, and the stars above us shone brighter than the lamps in our church.

They were the same stars, and they stood exactly in the same positions above me, as when I had sat in front of our hut at Delphi; and at last I almost fancied I was there. Suddenly there was a splash in the water, and the boat rocked violently. I cried out in horror, for Anastasia had fallen into the water: but in a moment Aphtanides had sprung in after her, and was holding her up to me! We dried her clothes as well as we could, remaining on the water till they were dry; for no one was to know what a fright we had had for our little adopted sister, in whose life Aphtanides now had a part.

The summer came. The sun burned so hot that the leaves turned yellow on the trees. I thought of our cool mountains, and of the fresh water they contained; my mother, too, longed for them; and one evening we wandered home. What peace, what silence! We walked on through the thick thyme, still fragrant though the sun had scorched its leaves. Not a single herdsman did we meet, not one solitary hut did we pass. Everything was quiet and deserted; but a shooting star announced that in heaven there was yet life. I know not if the clear blue air gleamed with light of its own, or if the radiance came from the stars; but we could see the outlines of the mountains quite plainly. My mother lighted a fire, roasted some roots she had brought with her, and I and my little sister slept among the thyme, without fear of the ugly Smidraki,* from whose throat fire spurts forth, or of the wolf and jackal; for my mother sat beside us, and I considered her presence protection enough for us.

We reached our old home; but the hut was a heap of ruins, and a new one had to be built. A few women lent my mother their aid, and in a few days walls were raised, and covered with a new roof of olive branches. My mother made many bottle cases of bark and skins; I kept the little flock of the priests,† and Anastasia and the little tortoises were my playmates.

Once we had a visit from our beloved Aphtanides, who said he had greatly longed to see us, and who stayed with us two whole happy days.

A month afterwards he came again, and told us that he was going in a ship to Corfu and Patras, but must bid us good-bye first; and he had brought a large fish for our mother. He had a great deal to tell, not only of the fishermen yonder in the Gulf of Lepanto, but also of

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*According to the Greek superstition, this is a monster generated from the unopened entrails of slaughtered sheep, which are thrown away in the fields.

†A peasant who can read often becomes a priest; he is then called "very holy Sir," and the lower orders kiss the ground on which he has stepped.

kings and heroes, who had once possessed Greece, just as the Turks possess it now.

I have seen a bud on a rose-bush gradually unfold in days and weeks, till it became a rose, and hung there in its beauty, before I was aware how large and beautiful and red it had become; and the same thing I now saw in Anastasia. She was now a beautiful grown girl, and I had become a stout stripling. The wolf-skins that covered my mother's and Anastasia's bed, I had myself taken from wolves that had fallen beneath my shots.

Years had gone by, when one evening Aphtanides came in, slender as a reed, strong and brown. He kissed us all, and had much to tell of the fortifications of Malta, of the great ocean, and of the marvellous sepulchres of Egypt. It sounded strange as a legend of the priests, and I looked up to him with a kind of veneration.

"How much you know!" I exclaimed; "what wonders you can tell of!"

"But you have told me the finest thing, after all," he replied. "You told me of a thing that has never been out of my thoughts—of the good old custom of the bond of friendship, a custom I should like to follow. Brother, let you and I go to church, as your father and Anastasia's went before us: your sister Anastasia is the most beautiful and most innocent of girls; she shall consecrate us! No people has such grand old customs as we Greeks."

Anastasia blushed like a young rose, and my mother kissed Aphtanides.

A couple of miles from our house there, where loose earth lies on the hill, and a few scattered trees give a shelter, stood the little church; a silver lamp hung in front of the altar.

I had put on my best clothes: the white fustanella fell in rich folds around my hips, the red jacket fitted tight and close, the tassel on my fez cap was silver, and in my girdle gleamed a knife and my pistols. Aphtanides was clad in the blue garb worn by Greek sailors; on his chest hung a silver plate with the figure of the Virgin Mary; his scarf was as costly as those worn by rich lords. Every one could see that we were about to go through a solemn ceremony. We stepped into the little simple church, where the evening sunlight, streaming through the door, gleamed on the burning lamp and the pictures on golden ground. We knelt down on the altar steps, and Anastasia came before us. A long white garment hung loose over her graceful form; on her white neck and bosom hung a chain, covered with old and new coins, forming a kind of collar. Her black hair was fastened in a knot, and confined

by a head-dress made of silver and gold coins that had been found in an old temple. No Greek girl had more beautiful ornaments than she. Her countenance glowed, and her eyes were like two stars.

We all three prayed silently; and then she said to us, "Will you be friends in life and in death?" "Yes," we replied. "Will you, whatever may happen, remember this: my brother is a part of myself. My secret is his, my happiness is his. Self-sacrifice, patience—everything in me belongs to him as to me?" And we again answered, "Yes."

Then she joined our hands and kissed us on the forehead, and we again prayed silently. Then the priest came through the door near the altar, and blessed us all three; and a song, sung by the other holy men, sounded from behind the altar screen, and the bond of eternal friendship was concluded. When we rose, I saw my mother standing by the church door weeping heartily.

How cheerful it was now, in our little hut, and by the springs of Delphi! On the evening before his departure, Aphtanides sat thoughtful with me on the declivity of a mountain; his arm was flung round my waist, and mine was round his neck: we spoke of the sorrows of Greece, and of the men whom the country could trust. Every thought of our souls lay clear before each of us, and I seized his hand.

"One thing thou must still know, one thing that till now has been a secret between myself and Heaven. My whole soul is filled with love! with a love stronger than the love I bear to my mother and to thee!"

"And whom do you love?" asked Aphtanides, and his face and neck grew red as fire.

"I love Anastasia," I replied—and his hand trembled in mine, and he became pale as a corpse. I saw it; I understood the cause; and I believe *my* hand trembled. I bent towards him, kissed his forehead, and whispered, "I have never spoken of it to her, and perhaps she does not love me. Brother, think of this: I have seen her daily; she has grown up beside me, and has become a part of my soul!"

"And she shall be thine!" he exclaimed, "thine! I may not deceive thee, nor will I do so. I also love her; but to-morrow I depart. In a year we shall see each other once more, and then you will be married, will you not? I have a little gold of my own: it shall be thine. Thou must, thou shalt take it."

And we wandered home silently across the mountains. It was late in the evening when we stood at my mother's door.

Anastasia held the lamp upwards as we entered; my mother was not there. She gazed at Aphtanides with a beautifully mournful gaze. "To-morrow you are going from us," she said: "I am very sorry for it."

"Sorry!" he repeated, and in his voice there seemed a trouble as great as the grief I myself felt. I could not speak, but he seized her hand and said, "Our brother yonder loves you, and he is dear to you, is he not? His very silence is a proof of his affection."

Anastasia trembled and burst into tears. Then I saw no one but her, thought of none but her, and threw my arms round her, and said, "I love thee!" She pressed her lips to mine, and flung her arms round my neck; but the lamp had fallen to the ground, and all was dark around us—dark as in the heart of poor Aphtanides.

Before daybreak he rose, kissed us all, said farewell, and went away. He had given all his money to my mother for us. Anastasia was my betrothed, and a few days afterwards she became my wife.

JACK THE DULLARD.

AN OLD STORY TOLD ANEW.

Far in the interior of the country lay an old baronial hall, and in it lived an old proprietor, who had two sons, which two young men thought themselves too clever by half. They wanted to go out and woo the king's daughter; for the maiden in question had publicly announced that she would choose for her husband that youth who could arrange his words best.

So these two geniuses prepared themselves a full week for the wooing —this was the longest time that could be granted them; but it was enough, for they had had much preparatory information, and everybody knows how useful that is. One of them knew the whole Latin dictionary by heart, and three whole years of the daily paper of the little town into the bargain; and so well, indeed, that he could repeat it all either backwards or forwards, just as he chose. The other was deeply read in the corporation laws, and knew by heart what every corporation ought to know; and accordingly he thought he could talk of affairs of state, and put his spoke in the wheel in the council. And he knew one thing more: he could embroider braces with roses and other flowers, and with arabesques, for he was a tasty, light-fingered fellow.

"I shall win the princess!" So cried both of them. Therefore their old papa gave to each a handsome horse. The youth who knew the

dictionary and newspaper by heart had a black horse, and he who knew all about the corporation laws received a milk-white steed. Then they rubbed the corners of their mouths with fish-oil, so that they might become very smooth and glib. All the servants stood below in the courtyard, and looked on while they mounted their horses; and just by chance the third son came up. For the proprietor had really three sons, though nobody counted the third with his brothers, because he was not so learned as they, and indeed he was generally known as "Jack the Dullard."

"Hallo!" said Jack the Dullard, "where are you going? I declare you have put on your Sunday clothes!"

"We're going to the king's court, as suitors to the king's daughter. Don't you know the announcement that has been made all through the country?" And they told him all about it.

"My word! I'll be in it too!" cried Jack the Dullard; and his two brothers burst out laughing at him, and rode away.

"Father dear," said Jack, "I must have a horse too. I do feel so desperately inclined to marry! If she accepts me, she accepts me; and if she won't have me, I'll have her; but she *shall* be mine!"

"Don't talk nonsense," replied the old gentleman. "You shall have no horse from me. You don't know how to speak—you can't arrange your words. Your brothers are very different fellows from you."

"Well," quoth Jack the Dullard, "if I can't have a horse, I'll take the billy-goat, who belongs to me, and he can carry me very well!"

And so said, so done. He mounted the billy-goat, pressed his heels into its sides, and gallopped down the high street like a hurricane.

"Hei, houp! that was a ride! Here I come!" shouted Jack the Dullard, and he sang till his voice echoed far and wide.

But his brothers rode slowly on in advance of him. They spoke not a word, for they were thinking about all the fine extempore speeches they would have to bring out, and all these had to be cleverly prepared beforehand.

"Hallo!" shouted Jack the Dullard. "Here am I! Look what I have found on the high-road." And he showed them what it was, and it was a dead crow.

"Dullard!" exclaimed the brothers, "what are you going to do with that?"

"With the crow? why, I am going to give it to the princess."

"Yes, do so," said they; and they laughed, and rode on.

"Hallo, here I am again! Just see what I have found now: you don't find that on the high-road every day!"

JACK'S INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCESS.

And the brothers turned round to see what he could have found now.

"Dullard!" they cried, "that is only an old wooden shoe, and the upper part is missing into the bargain; are you going to give that also to the princess?"

"Most certainly I shall," replied Jack the Dullard; and again the brothers laughed and rode on, and thus they got far in advance of him; but——

"Halio—hop rara!" and there was Jack the Dullard again. "It is getting better and better," he cried. "Hurrah! it is quite famous."

"Why, what have you found this time?" inquired the brothers.

"Oh," said Jack the Dullard, "I can hardly tell you. How glad the princess will be!"

"Bah!" said the brothers; "that is nothing but clay out of the ditch."

"Yes, certainly it is," said Jack the Dullard; "and clay of the finest sort. See, it is so wet, it runs through one's fingers." And he filled his pocket with the clay.

But his brothers galloped on till the sparks flew, and consequently they arrived a full hour earlier at the town-gate than could Jack. Now at the gate each suitor was provided with a number, and all were placed in rows immediately on their arrival, six in each row, and so closely packed together that they could not move their arms; and that was a prudent arrangement, for they would certainly have come to blows, had they been able, merely because one of them stood before the other.

All the inhabitants of the country round about stood in great crowds around the castle, almost under the very windows, to see the princess receive the suitors; and as each stepped into the hall, his power of speech seemed to desert him, like the light of a candle that is blown out. Then the princess would say, "He is of no use! away with him out of the hall!"

At last the turn came for that brother who knew the dictionary by heart; but he did not know it now; he had absolutely forgotten it altogether; and the boards seemed to re-echo with his footsteps, and the ceiling of the hall was made of looking-glass, so that he saw himself standing on his head; and at the window stood three clerks and a head clerk, and every one of them was writing down every single word that was uttered, so that it might be printed in the newspapers, and sold for a penny at the street corners. It was a terrible ordeal, and they had moreover made such a fire in the stove, that the room seemed quite red hot.

"It is dreadfully hot here!" observed the first brother.

"Yes," replied the princess, "my father is going to roast young pullets to-day."

"Baa!" there he stood like a baa-lamb. He had not been prepared for a speech of this kind; and had not a word to say, though he intended to say something witty. "Baa!"

"He is of no use!" said the princess. "Away with him."

And he was obliged to go accordingly. And now the second brother came in.

"It is terribly warm here!" he observed.

"Yes, we're roasting pullets to-day," replied the princess.

"What—what were you—were you pleased to ob——" stammered he —and all the clerks wrote down, "pleased to ob——"

"He is of no use!" said the princess. "Away with him!"

Now came the turn of Jack the Dullard. He rode into the hall on his goat.

"Well, it's most abominably hot here."

"Yes, because I'm roasting young pullets," replied the princess.

"Ah, that's lucky!" exclaimed Jack the Dullard, "for I suppose you'll let me roast my crow at the same time?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said the princess. "But have you anything you can roast it in? for I have neither pot nor pan."

"Certainly I have!" said Jack. "Here's a cooking utensil with a tin handle." And he brought out the old wooden shoe, and put the crow into it.

"Well, that *is* a famous dish!" said the princess. "But what shall we do for sauce?"

"Oh, I have that in my pocket," said Jack: "I have so much of it, that I can afford to throw some away;" and he poured some of the clay out of his pocket.

"I like that!" said the princess. "You can give an answer, and you have something to say for yourself, and so you shall be my husband. But are you aware that every word we speak is being taken down, and will be published in the paper to-morrow? Look yonder, and you will see in every window three clerks and a head clerk; and the old head clerk is the worst of all, for he can't understand anything." But she only said this to frighten Jack the Dullard: and the clerks gave a great crow of delight, and each one spurted a blot out of his pen on to the floor.

"Oh, those are the gentlemen, are they?" said Jack; "then I will give the best I have to the head clerk." And he turned out his pockets, and flung the wet clay full in the head clerk's face.

"That was very cleverly done," observed the princess. "I could not have done that; but I shall learn in time."

And accordingly Jack the Dullard was made a king, and received a crown and a wife, and sat upon a throne. And this report we have wet from the press of the head clerk and the corporation of printers—but they are not to be depended upon in the least!

SOMETHING.

"I WANT to be something!" said the eldest of five brothers. "I want to do something in the world. I don't care how humble my position may be in society, if I only effect some good, for that will really be something. I'll make bricks, for they are quite indispensable things, and then I shall truly have done something."

"But that *something* will not be enough!" quoth the second brother. "What you intend doing is just as much as nothing at all. It is journeyman's work, and can be done by a machine. No, I would rather be a bricklayer at once, for that *is* something real; and that's what I will be. That brings rank: as a bricklayer one belongs to a guild, and is a citizen, and has one's own flag and one's own house of call. Yes, and if all goes well, I will keep journeymen. I shall become a master bricklayer, and my wife will be a master's wife—that is what *I* call something."

"That's nothing at all!" said the third. "That is beyond the pale of the guild, and there are many of those in a town that stand far above the mere master artizan. You may be an honest man; but as a 'master' you will after all only belong to those who are ranked among common men. I know something better than that. I will be an architect, and will thus enter into the territory of art and speculation. I shall be reckoned among those who stand high in point of intellect. I shall certainly have to serve up from the pickaxe, so to speak; so I must begin as a carpenter's apprentice, and must go about as an assistant, in a cap, though I am accustomed to wear a silk hat. I shall have to fetch beer and spirits for the common journeymen, and they will call me 'thou,' and that is insulting! But I shall imagine to myself that the whole thing is only acting, and a kind of masquerade. To-morrow—that is to say, when I have served my time—I shall go my own way, and the others will be nothing to me. I shall go to the academy, and get instructions in drawing, and shall be called an architect. *That's something!* I may get to be called 'sir,' and even 'worshipful sir,' or even get a handle at the front or at the back of my name, and shall go on building and building, just as those before me have built. That will always be a thing to remember, and that's what *I* call something!"

"But I don't care at all for *that* something," said the fourth. "*I* won't

sail in the wake of others, and be a copyist. I will be a genius; and will stand up greater than all the rest of you together. I shall be the creator of a new style, and will give the plan of a building suitable to the climate and the material of the country, for the nationality of the people, for the development of the age—and an additional storey for my own genius."

"But supposing the climate and the material are bad," said the fifth, "that would be a disastrous circumstance, for these two exert a great influence! Nationalty, moreover, may expand itself until it becomes affectation, and the development of the century may run wild with your work, as youth often runs wild. I quite realise the fact that none of you will be anything real, however much you may believe in yourselves. But, do what you like, I will not resemble you: I shall keep on the outside of things, and criticise whatever you produce. To every work there is attached something that is not right—something that has gone wrong; and I will ferret that out and find fault with it; and *that* will be doing *something!*"

And he kept his word; and everybody said concerning this fifth brother, "There is certainly something in him: he has a good head; but he does nothing." And by that very means they thought *something* of him!

Now, you see, this is only a little story; but it will never end so long as the world lasts.

But what became of the five brothers? Why, this is *nothing*, and not *something*.

Listen, it is a capital story.

The eldest brother, he who manufactured bricks, soon became aware of the fact that every brick, however small it might be, produced for him a little coin, though this coin was only copper; and many copper pennies laid one upon the other can be changed into a shining dollar; and wherever one knocks with such a dollar in one's hand, whether at the baker's, or the butcher's, or the tailor's—wherever it may be, the door flies open, and the visitor is welcomed, and gets what he wants. You see that is what comes of bricks. Some of those belonging to the eldest brother certainly crumbled away, or broke in two, but there was a use even for these.

On the high rampart, the wall that kept out the sea, Margaret, the poor woman, wished to build herself a little house. All the faulty bricks were given to her, and a few perfect ones into the bargain, for the eldest brother was a good-natured man, though he certainly did not achieve anything beyond the manufacture of bricks. The poor woman

put together the house for herself. It was little and narrow, and the single window was quite crooked. The door was too low, and the thatched roof might have shown better workmanship. But after all it was a shelter; and from the little house you could look far across the sea, whose waves broke vainly against the protecting rampart on which it was built. The salt billows spurted their spray over the whole house, which was still standing when he who had given the bricks for its erection had long been dead and buried.

The second brother knew better how to build a wall, for he had served an apprenticeship to it. When he had served his time and passed his examination he packed his knapsack and sang the journeyman's song:

> "While I am young I 'll wander, from place to place I 'll roam,
> And everywhere build houses, until I come back home;
> And youth will give me courage, and my true love won't forget:
> Hurrah then for a workman's life! I 'll be a master yet!"

And he carried his idea into effect. When he had come home and become a master, he built one house after another in the town. He built a whole street; and when the street was finished and became an ornament to the place, the houses built a house for him in return, that was to be his own. But how can houses build a house? If you ask them they will not answer you, but people will understand what is meant by the expression, and say, 'certainly, it was the street that built his house for him.' It was little, and the floor was covered with clay; but when he danced with his bride upon this clay floor, it seemed to become polished oak; and from every stone in the wall sprang forth a flower, and the room was gay, as if with the costliest paper-hanger's work. It was a pretty house, and in it lived a happy pair. The flag of the guild fluttered before the house, and the journeymen and apprentices shouted hurrah! Yes, he certainly was *something!* And at last he died; and *that* was something too.

Now came the architect, the third brother, who had been at first a carpenter's apprentice, had worn a cap, and served as an errand boy, but had afterwards gone to the academy, and risen to become an architect, and to be called "honoured sir." Yes, if the houses of the street had built a house for the brother who had become a bricklayer, the street now received its name from the architect, and the handsomest house in it became his property. *That* was something, and *he* was something; and he had a long title before and after his name. His children were called *genteel* children, and when he died his widow was "a widow of rank," and *that* is something!—and his name always remained at the corner of the

street, and lived on in the mouth of every one as the street's name—and *that* was something!

Now came the genius of the family, the fourth brother, who wanted to invent something new and original, and an additional storey on the top of it for himself. But the top storey tumbled down, and he came tumbling down with it, and broke his neck. Nevertheless he had a splendid funeral, with guild flags and music; poems in the papers, and flowers strewn on the paving-stones in the street; and three funeral orations were held over him, each one longer than the last, which would have rejoiced him greatly, for he always liked it when people talked about him; a monument also was erected over his grave. It was only one storey high, but still it was *something*.

Now he was dead like the three other brothers; but the last, the one who was a critic, outlived them all: and that was quite right, for by this means he got the last word, and it was of great importance to him to have the last word. The people always said he had a good head of his own. At last his hour came, and he died, and came to the gates of Paradise. There souls always enter two and two, and he came up with another soul that wanted to get into Paradise too; and who should this be but old dame Margaret from the house upon the sea wall.

"I suppose this is done for the sake of contrast, that I and this wretched soul should arrive here at exactly the same time!" said the critic. "Pray who are you, my good woman?" he asked. "Do you want to get in here too?"

And the old woman curtsied as well as she could: she thought it must be St. Peter himself talking to her.

"I'm a poor old woman of a very humble family," she replied. "I'm old Margaret that lived in the house on the sea wall."

"Well, and what have you done? what have you accomplished down there?"

"I have really accomplished nothing at all in the world: nothing that I can plead to have the doors here opened to me. It would be a real mercy to allow me to slip in through the gate."

"In what manner did you leave the world?" asked he, just for the sake of saying something; for it was wearisome work standing there and saying nothing.

"Why, I really don't know how I left it. I was sick and miserable during my last years, and could not well bear creeping out of bed, and going out suddenly into the frost and cold. It was a hard winter, but I have got out of it all now. For a few days the weather was quite calm, but very cold, as your honour must very well know. The sea was

covered with ice as far as one could look. All the people from the town walked out upon the ice, and I think they said there was a dance there, and skating. There was beautiful music and a great feast there too; the sound came into my poor little room, where I lay ill. And it was towards the evening; the moon had risen beautifully, but was not yet in its full splendour; I looked from my bed out over the wide sea, and far off, just where the sea and sky join, a strange white cloud came up. I lay looking at the cloud, and I saw a little black spot in the middle of it, that grew larger and larger; and now I knew what it meant, for I am old and experienced, though this token is not often seen. I knew it, and a shuddering came upon me. Twice in my life I have seen the same thing; and I knew there would be an awful tempest, and a spring flood, which would overwhelm the poor people who were now drinking and dancing and rejoicing—young and old, the whole city had issued forth: who was to warn them, if no one saw what was coming yonder, or knew, as I did, what it meant? I was dreadfully alarmed, and felt more lively than I had done for a long time. I crept out of bed, and got to the window, but could not crawl farther, I was so exhausted. But I managed to open the window. I saw the people outside running and jumping about on the ice; I could see the beautiful flags that waved in the wind. I heard the boys shouting 'hurrah!' and the servant men and maids singing. There were all kinds of merriment going on. But the white cloud with the black spot! I cried out as loud as I could, but no one heard me; I was too far from the people. Soon the storm would burst, and the ice would break, and all who were upon it would be lost without remedy. They could not hear me, and I could not come out to them. Oh, if I could only bring them ashore! Then kind Heaven inspired me with the thought of setting fire to my bed, and rather to let the house burn down, than that all those people should perish so miserably. I succeeded in lighting up a beacon for them. The red flame blazed up on high, and I escaped out of the door, but fell down exhausted on the threshold, and could get no farther. The flames rushed out towards me, flickered through the window, and rose high above the roof. All the people on the ice yonder beheld it, and ran as fast as they could, to give aid to a poor old woman who, they thought, was being burned to death. Not one remained behind. I heard them coming; but I also became aware of a rushing sound in the air; I heard a rumbling like the sound of heavy artillery; the spring-flood was lifting the covering of ice, which presently cracked and burst into a thousand fragments. But the people succeeded in reaching the sea-wall—I saved them all! But I fancy I could not bear the cold and the fright, and so

I came up here to the gates of Paradise. I am told they are opened to poor creatures like me—and now I have no house left down upon the rampart: not that I think this will give me admission here."

Then the gates of heaven were opened, and the angel led the old woman in. She left a straw behind her, a straw that had been in her bed when she set it on fire to save the lives of many; and this straw had been changed into the purest gold—into gold that grew and grew, and spread out into beauteous leaves and flowers.

DAME MARGERY FIRES HER BED FOR A BEACON.

"Look, this is what the poor woman brought," said the angel to the critic. "What dost *thou* bring? I know that thou hast accomplished nothing—thou hast not made so much as a single brick. Ah, if thou couldst only return, and effect at least so much as that! Probably the brick, when thou hadst made it, would not be worth much; but if it were made with good-will, it would at least be *something*. But thou canst not go back, and I can do nothing for thee!"

Then the poor soul, the old dame who had lived on the dyke, put in a petition for him. She said,

"His brother gave me the bricks and the pieces out of which I built up my house, and that was a great deal for a poor woman like me. Could not all those bricks and pieces be counted as a single brick in his favour? It was an act of mercy. He wants it now; and is not this the very fountain of mercy?"

Then the angel said:

"Thy brother, him whom thou hast regarded as the least among you all, he whose honest industry seemed to thee as the most humble, hath given thee this heavenly gift. Thou shalt not be turned away. It shall be vouchsafed to thee to stand here without the gate, and to reflect, and repent of thy life down yonder; but thou shalt not be admitted until thou hast in real earnest accomplished *something*."

"I could have said that in better words!" thought the critic, but he did not find fault aloud; and for him, after all, that was "SOMETHING!"

UNDER THE WILLOW TREE.

THE region round the little town of Kjöge is very bleak and bare. The town certainly lies by the sea shore, which is always beautiful, but just there it might be more beautiful than it is: all around are flat fields, and it is a long way to the forest. But when one is very much at home in a place, one always finds something beautiful, and something that one longs for in the most charming spot in the word that is strange to us. We confess that, by the utmost boundary of the little town, where some humble gardens skirt the streamlet that falls into the sea, it must be very pretty in summer; and this was the opinion of the two children from neighbouring houses, who were playing there, and forcing their way through the goosberry bushes, to get to one another. In one of the gardens stood an elder tree, and in the other an old willow, and under the latter the children were especially very fond of playing; they were allowed to play there, though, indeed, the tree stood close beside the stream, and they might easily have fallen into the water. But the eye of God watches over the little ones; if it did not, they would be badly off. And, moreover, they were very careful with respect to the water; in fact, the boy was so much afraid of it, that they could not lure him into the sea in summer, when the other children were splashing about in the waves. Accordingly, he was famously jeered

and mocked at, and had to bear the jeering and mockery as best he could. But once Joanna, the neighbour's little girl, dreamed she was sailing in a boat, and Knud waded out to join her till the water rose, first to his neck, and afterwards closed over his head, so that he disappeared altogether. From the time when little Knud heard of this dream, he would no longer bear the teazing of the other boys. He might go into the water now, he said, for Joanna had dreamed it. He certainly never carried the idea into practice, but the dream was his great guide for all that.

Their parents, who were poor people, often took tea together, and Knud and Joanna played in the gardens and on the high-road, where a row of willows had been planted beside the skirting ditch; these trees, with their polled tops, certainly did not look beautiful, but they were not put there for ornament, but for use. The old willow tree in the garden was much handsomer, and therefore the children were fond of sitting under it. In the town itself there was a great market-place, and at the time of the fair this place was covered with whole streets of tents and booths, containing silk ribbons, boots, and everything that a person could wish for. There was great crowding, and generally the weather was rainy; but it did not destroy the fragrance of the honey-cakes and the gingerbread, of which there was a booth quite full; and the best of it was, that the man who kept this booth came every year to lodge during the fair-time in the dwelling of little Knud's father. Consequently there came a present of a bit of gingaerbread every now and then, and of course Joanna received her share of the gift. But, perhaps the most charming thing of all was that the gingerbread dealer knew all sorts of tales, and could even relate histories about his own gingerbread cakes; and one evening, in particular, he told a story about them which made such a deep impression on the children that they never forgot it; and for that reason it is perhaps advisable that we should hear it too, more especially as the story is not long.

"On the shop-board," he said, "lay two gingerbread cakes, one in the shape of a man with a hat, the other of a maiden without a bonnet; both their faces were on the side that was uppermost, for they were to be looked at on that side, and not on the other; and, indeed, most people have a favourable side from which they should be viewed. On the left side the man wore a bitter almond—that was his heart; but the maiden, on the other hand, was honey-cake all over. They were placed as samples on the shop-board, and remaining there a long time, at last they fell in love with one another, but neither told the other, as they should have done if they had expected anything to come of it.

"'He is a man, and therefore he must speak first,' she thought; but she felt quite contented, for she knew her love was returned.

"His thoughts were far more extravagant, as is always the case with a man. He dreamed that he was a real street boy, that he had four pennies of his own, and that he purchased the maiden, and ate her up. So they lay on the shop-board for weeks and weeks, and grew dry and hard, but the thoughts of the maiden became ever more gentle and maidenly.

"'It is enough for me that I have lived on the same table with him,' she said, and crack! she broke in two.

"'If she had only known of my love, she would have kept together a little longer,' he thought.

"And that is the story, and here they are, both of them," said the baker in conclusion. "They are remarkable for their curious history, and for their silent love, which never came to anything. And there they are for you!" and, so saying, he gave Joanna the man who was yet entire, and Knud got the broken maiden; but the children had been so much impressed by the story that they could not summon courage to eat the lovers up.

On the following day they went out with them to the churchyard, and sat down by the church wall, which is covered, winter and summer, with the most luxuriant ivy as with a rich carpet. Here they stood the two cake figures up in the sunshine among the green leaves, and told the story to a group of other children; they told them of the silent love which led to nothing. It was called *love* because the story was so lovely, on that they all agreed. But when they turned to look again at the gingerbread pair, a big boy, out of mischief, had eaten up the broken maiden. The children cried about this, and afterwards—probably that the poor lover might not be left in the world lonely and desolate—they ate him up too; but they never forgot the story.

The children were always together by the elder tree and under the willow, and the little girl sang the most beautiful songs with a voice that was clear as a bell. Knud, on the other hand, had not a note of music in him, but he knew the words of the songs, and that, at least, was something. The people of Kjöge, even to the rich wife of the fancy-shop keeper, stood still and listened when Joanna sang. "She has a very sweet voice, that little girl," they said.

Those were glorious days, but they could not last for ever. The neighbours were neighbours no longer. The little maiden's mother was dead, and the father intended to marry again, in the capital, where he had been promised a living as a messenger, which was to be a very

THE NAUGHTY BOY WHO ATE THE GINGERBREAD MAIDEN.

lucrative office. And the neighbours separated regretfully, the children weeping heartily, but the parents promised that they should at least write to one another once a year.

And Knud was bound apprentice to a shoemaker, for the big boy

could not be allowed to run wild any longer; and moreover he was confirmed.

Ah, how gladly on that day of celebration would he have been in Copenhagen with little Joanna! but he remained in Kjöge, and had never yet been to Copenhagen, though the little town is only five Danish miles distant from the capital; but far across the bay, when the sky was clear, Knud had seen the towers in the distance, and on the day of his confirmation he could distinctly see the golden cross on the principal church glittering in the sun.

Ah, how often his thoughts were with Joanna! Did she think of him? Yes. Towards Christmas there came a letter from her father to the parents of Knud, to say that they were getting on very well in Copenhagen, and especially might Joanna look forward to a brilliant future on the strength of her fine voice. She had been engaged in the theatre in which people sing, and was already earning some money, out of which she sent her dear neighbours of Kjöge a dollar for the merry Christmas Eve. They were to drink her health, she had herself added in a postscript, and in the same postscript there stood further, "A kind greeting to Knud."

The whole family wept: and yet all this was very pleasant; those were joyful tears that they shed. Knud's thoughts had been occupied every day with Joanna; and now he knew that she also thought of him: and the nearer the time came when his apprenticeship would be over, the more clearly did it appear to him that he was very fond of Joanna, and that she must be his wife; and when he thought of this, a smile came upon his lips, and he drew the thread twice as fast as before, and pressed his foot hard against the knee-strap. He ran the awl far into his finger, but he did not care for that. He determined not to play the dumb lover, as the two gingerbread cakes had done: the story should teach him a lesson.

And now he was a journeyman, and his knapsack was packed ready for his journey: at length, for the first time in his life, he was to go to Copenhagen, where a master was already waiting for him. How glad Joanna would be! She was now seventeen years old, and he nineteen.

Already in Kjöge he had wanted to buy a gold ring for her; but he recollected that such things were to be had far better in Copenhagen. And now he took leave of his parents, and on a rainy day, late in the autumn, went forth on foot out of the town of his birth. The leaves were falling down from the trees, and he arrived at his new master's in the metropolis wet to the skin. Next Sunday he was to pay a visit to Joanna's father. The new journeyman's clothes were brought

forth, and the new hat from Kjöge was put on, which became Knud very well, for till this time he had only worn a cap. And he found the house he sought, and mounted flight after flight of stairs until he became almost giddy. It was terrible to him to see how people lived piled up one over the other in the dreadful city.

Everything in the room had a prosperous look, and Joanna's father received him very kindly. To the new wife he was a stranger, but she shook hands with him, and gave him some coffee.

"Joanna will be glad to see you," said the father: "you have grown quite a nice young man. You shall see her presently. She is a girl who rejoices my heart, and, please God, she will rejoice it yet more. She has her own room now, and pays us rent for it." And the father knocked quite politely at the door, as if he were a visitor, and then they went in.

But how pretty everything was in that room! such an apartment was certainly not to be found in all Kjöge: the queen herself could not be more charmingly lodged. There were carpets, there were window curtains quite down to the floor, and around were flowers and pictures, and a mirror into which there was almost danger that a visitor might step, for it was as large as a door; and there was even a velvet chair.

Knud saw all this at a glance: and yet he saw nothing but Joanna. She was a grown maiden, quite different from what Knud had fancied her, and much more beautiful. In all Kjöge there was not a girl like her. How graceful she was, and with what an odd unfamiliar glance she looked at Knud! But that was only for a moment, and then she rushed towards him as if she would have kissed him. She did not really do so, but she came very near it. Yes, she was certainly rejoiced at the arrival of the friend of her youth! The tears were actually in her eyes; and she had much to say, and many questions to put concerning all, from Knud's parents down to the elder tree and the willow, which she called Elder-mother and Willow-father, as if they had been human beings; and indeed they might pass as such, just as well as the gingerbread cakes; and of these she spoke too, and of their silent love, and how they had lain upon the shop-board and split in two—and then she laughed very heartily; but the blood mounted into Knud's cheeks, and his heart beat thick and fast No, she had not grown proud at all. And it was through her—he noticed it well—that her parents invited him to stay the whole evening with them; and she poured out the tea and gave him a cup with her own hands; and afterwards she took a book and read aloud to them, and it seemed to Knud that what she read was all about himself and his love, for it matched so well with his thoughts; and then she sang a simple song, but through her singing it became like a history,

and seemed to be the outpouring of her very heart. Yes, certainly she was fond of Knud. The tears coursed down his cheeks—he could not restrain them, nor could he speak a single word: he seemed to himself as if he were struck dumb; and yet she pressed his hand, and said,

"You have a good heart, Knud—remain always as you are now."

That was an evening of matchless delight to Knud; to sleep after it was impossible, and accordingly Knud did not sleep.

At parting, Joanna's father had said, "Now, you won't forget us altogether! Don't let the whole winter go by without once coming to see us again;" and therefore he could very well go again the next Sunday, and resolved to do so. But every evening when working hours were over—and they worked by candlelight there—Knud went out through the town: he went into the street in which Joanna lived, and looked up at her window; it was almost always lit up, and one evening he could see the shadow of her face quite plainly on the curtain—and that was a grand evening for him. His master's wife did not like his galivanting abroad every evening, as she expressed it; and she shook her head; but the master only smiled.

"He is only a young fellow," he said.

But Knud thought to himself: "On Sunday I shall see her, and I shall tell her how completely she reigns in my heart and soul, and that she must be my little wife. I know I am only a poor journeyman shoemaker, but I shall work and strive—yes, I shall tell her so. Nothing comes of silent love: I have learned that from the cakes."

And Sunday came round, and Knud sallied forth; but, unluckily, they were all invited out for that evening, and were obliged to tell him so. Joanna pressed his hand and said,

"Have you ever been to the theatre? You must go once. I shall sing on Wednesday, and if you have time on that evening, I will send you a ticket; my father knows where your master lives."

How kind that was of her! And on Wednesday at noon he received a sealed paper, with no words written in it; but the ticket was there, and in the evening Knud went to the theatre for the first time in his life. And what did he see? He saw Joanna, and how charming and how beautiful she looked! She was certainly married to a stranger, but that was all in the play—something that was only make-believe, as Knud knew very well. If it had been real, he thought, she would never have had the heart to send him a ticket that he might go and see it. And all the people shouted and applauded, and Knud cried out "hurrah!"

Even the king smiled at Joanna, and seemed to delight in her. Ah, how small Knud felt! but then he loved her so dearly, and thought that

she loved him too; but it was for the man to speak the first word, as the gingerbread maiden in the child's story had taught him: and there was a great deal for him in that story.

So soon as Sunday came, he went again. He felt as if he were going into a church. Joanna was alone, and received him—it could not have happened more fortunately. "It is well that you are come," she said.

KNUD'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

"I had an idea of sending my father to you, only I felt a presentiment that you would be here this evening; for I must tell you that I start for France on Friday: I must go there, if I am to become efficient."

It seemed to Knud as if the whole room were whirling round and round with him. He felt as if his heart would presently burst: no tear rose to his eyes, but still it was easy to see how sorrowful he was

"You honest, faithful soul!" she exclaimed; and these words of hers loosened Knud's tongue. He told her how constantly he loved her, and

that she must become his wife; and as he said this, he saw Joanna change colour and turn pale. She let his hand fall, and answered, seriously and mournfully,

"Knud, do not make yourself and me unhappy. I shall always be a good sister to you, one in whom you may trust, but I shall never be anything more." And she drew her white hand over his hot forehead. "Heaven gives us strength for much," she said, "if we only endeavour to do our best."

At that moment the stepmother came into the room; and Joanna said quickly,

"Knud is quite inconsolable because I am going away. Come, be a man," she continued, and laid her hand upon his shoulder; and it seemed as if they had been talking of the journey, and nothing else. "You are a child," she added; "but now you must be good and reasonable, as you used to be under the willow tree, when we were both children."

But Knud felt as if the whole world had slid out of its course, and his thoughts were like a loose thread fluttering to and fro in the wind. He stayed, though he could not remember if she had asked him to stay; and she was kind and good, and poured out his tea for him, and sang to him. It had not the old tone, and yet it was wonderfully beautiful, and made his heart feel ready to burst. And then they parted. Knud did not offer her his hand, but she seized it, and said,

"Surely you will shake hands with your sister at parting, old playfellow!"

And she smiled through the tears that were rolling over her cheeks, and she repeated the word "brother"—and certainly there was good consolation in that—and thus they parted.

She sailed to France, and Knud wandered about the muddy streets of Copenhagen. The other journeymen in the workshop asked him why he went about so gloomily, and told him he should go and amuse himself with them, for he was a young fellow.

And they went with him to the dancing-rooms. He saw many handsome girls there, but certainly not one like Joanna; and here, where he thought to forget her, she stood more vividly than ever before the eyes of his soul. "Heaven gives us strength for a great deal, if we only try to do our best," she had said; and holy thoughts came into his mind, and he folded his hands. The violins played, and the girls danced round in a circle; and he was quite startled, for it seemed to him as if he were in a place to which he ought not to have brought Joanna—for she was there with him, in his heart; and accordingly he went out. He ran through the streets, and passed by the house where she had dwelt; it

was dark there, dark everywhere, and empty, and lonely. The world went on its course, but Knud pursued his lonely way, unheedingly.

The winter came, and the streams were frozen. Everything seemed to be preparing for a burial. But when spring returned, and the first steamer was to start, a longing seized him to go away, far, far into the world, but not to France. So he packed his knapsack, and wandered far into the German land, from city to city, without rest or peace; and it was not till he came to the glorious old city of Nuremberg that he could master his restless spirit; and in Nuremberg, therefore, he decided to remain.

Nuremberg is a wonderful old city, and looks as if it were cut out of an old picture-book. The streets seem to stretch themselves along just as they please. The houses do not like standing in regular ranks. Gables with little towers, arabesques, and pillars, start out over the pathway, and from the strange peaked roofs water-spouts, formed like dragons or great slim dogs, extend far over the street.

Here in the market-place stood Knud, with his knapsack on his back. He stood by one of the old fountains that are adorned with splendid bronze figures, scriptural and historical, rising up between the gushing jets of water. A pretty servant-maid was just filling her pails, and she gave Knud a refreshing draught; and as her hand was full of roses, she gave him one of the flowers, and he accepted it as a good omen.

From the neighbouring church the strains of the organ were sounding: they seemed to him as familiar as the tones of the organ at home at Kjöge; and he went into the great cathedral. The sunlight streamed in through the stained glass windows, between the two lofty slender pillars. His spirit became prayerful, and peace returned to his soul.

And he sought and found a good master in Nuremberg, with whom he stayed, and in whose house he learned the German language.

The old moat round the town has been converted into a number of little kitchen gardens; but the high walls are standing yet, with their heavy towers. The ropemaker twists his ropes on a gallery or walk built of wood, inside the town wall, where elder bushes grow out of the clefts and cracks, spreading their green twigs over the little low houses that stand below; and in one of these dwelt the master with whom Knud worked; and over the little garret window at which Knud sat the elder waved its branches.

Here he lived through a summer and a winter; but when the spring came again he could bear it no longer. The elder was in blossom, and its fragrance reminded him so of home, that he fancied himself back in the garden at Kjöge; and therefore Knud went away from his master,

and dwelt with another, farther in the town, over whose house no elder bush grew.

His workshop was quite close to one of the old stone bridges, by a low water-mill, that rushed and foamed always. Without, rolled the roaring stream, hemmed in by houses, whose old decayed gables looked ready to topple down into the water. No elder grew here—there was not even a flower-pot with its little green plant; but just opposite the workshop stood a great old willow tree, that seemed to cling fast to the house, for fear of being carried away by the water, and which stretched forth its branches over the river, just as the willow at Kjöge spread its arms across the streamlet by the gardens there.

Yes, he had certainly gone from the "Elder-mother" to the "Willow-father." The tree here had something, especially on moonlight evenings, that went straight to his heart—and that something was not in the moonlight, but in the old tree itself.

Nevertheless, he could not remain. Why not? Ask the willow tree, ask the blooming elder! And therefore he bade farewell to his master in Nuremberg, and journeyed onward.

To no one did he speak of Joanna—in his secret heart he hid his sorrow; and he thought of the deep meaning in the old childish story of the two cakes. Now he understood why the man had a bitter almond in his breast—he himself felt the bitterness of it; and Joanna, who was always so gentle and kind, was typified by the honey-cake. The strap of his knapsack seemed so tight across his chest that he could scarcely breathe; he loosened it, but was not relieved. He saw but half the world around him; the other half he carried about him, and within himself. And thus it stood with him.

Not till he came in sight of the high mountains did the world appear freer to him; and now his thoughts were turned without, and tears came into his eyes.

The Alps appeared to him as the folded wings of the earth; how if they were to unfold themselves, and display their variegated pictures of black woods, foaming waters, clouds, and masses of snow? At the last day, he thought, the world will lift up its great wings, and mount upwards towards the sky, and burst like a soap-bubble in the glance of the Highest!

"Ah," sighed he, "that the Last Day were come!"

Silently he wandered through the land, that seemed to him as an orchard covered with soft turf. From the wooden balconies of the houses the girls who sat busy with their lace-making nodded at him; the summits of the mountains glowed in the red sun of the evening;

and when he saw the green lakes gleaming among the dark trees, he thought of the coast by the Bay of Kjöge, and there was a longing in his bosom, but it was pain no more.

There where the Rhine rolls onward like a great billow, and bursts, and is changed into snow-white, gleaming, cloud-like masses, as if clouds were being created there, with the rainbow fluttering like a loose band above them; there he thought of the water-mill at Kjöge, with its rushing, foaming water.

Gladly would he have remained in the quiet Rhenish town, but here too were too many elder trees and willows, and therefore he journeyed on, over the high, mighty mountains, through shattered walls of rock, and on roads that clung like swallows' nests to the mountain-side. The waters foamed on in the depths, the clouds were below him, and he strode on over thistles, Alpine roses, and snow, in the warm summer sun; and saying farewell to the lands of the North, he passed on under the shade of blooming chestnut trees, and through vineyards and fields of maize. The mountains were a wall between him and all his recollections; and he wished it to be so.

Before him lay a great glorious city which they called *Milano*, and here he found a German master who gave him work. They were an old pious couple, in whose workshop he now laboured. And the two old people became quite fond of the quiet journeyman, who said little, but worked all the more, and led a pious Christian life. To himself also it seemed as if Heaven had lifted the heavy burden from his heart.

His favourite pastime was to mount now and then upon the mighty marble church, which seemed to him to have been formed of the snow of his native land, fashioned into roofs, and pinnacles, and decorated open halls: from every corner and every point the white statues smiled upon him. Above him was the blue sky, below him the city and the wide-spreading Lombard plains, and towards the north the high mountains clad with perpetual snow; and he thought of the church at Kjöge, with its red, ivy-covered walls, but he did not long to go thither: here, beyond the mountains, he would be buried.

He had dwelt here a year, and three years had passed away since he left his home, when one day his master took him into the city, not to the circus where riders exhibited, but to the opera, where was a hall worth seeing. There were seven storeys, from each of which beautiful silken curtains hung down, and from the ground to the dizzy height of the roof sat elegant ladies, with bouquets of flowers in their hands, as if they were at a ball, and the gentlemen were in full dress, and many of them decorated with gold and silver. It was as bright there as in

the brilliant sunshine, and the music rolled gloriously through the building. Everything was much more splendid than in the theatre at Copenhagen, but then Joanna had been there, and —— could it be? Yes, it was like magic—she was here also! for the curtain rose, and Joanna appeared, dressed in silk and gold, with a crown upon her head: she sang as he thought none but angels could sing, and came far forward, quite to the front of the stage, and smiled as only Joanna could smile, and looked straight down at Knud. Poor Knud seized his master's hand, and called out aloud, "Joanna!" but no one heard but the master, who nodded his head, for the loud music sounded above everything. "Yes, yes, her name is Joanna," said the master; and he drew forth a printed playbill, and showed Knud her name—for the full name was printed there.

No, it was not a dream! All the people applauded, and threw wreaths and flowers to her, and every time she went away they called her back, so that she was always going and coming.

In the street the people crowded round her carriage, and drew it away in triumph. Knud was in the foremost row, and shouted as joyously as any; and when the carriage stopped before her brilliantly lighted house, Knud stood close beside the door of the carriage. It flew open, and she stepped out: the light fell upon her dear face, as she smiled, and made a kindly gesture of thanks, and appeared deeply moved. Knud looked straight into her face, and she looked into his, but she did not know him. A man, with a star glittering on his breast, gave her his arm—and it was whispered about that the two were engaged.

Then Knud went home and packed his knapsack. He was determined to go back to his own home, to the elder and the willow tree—ah, under the willow tree! A whole life is sometimes lived through in a single hour.

The old couple begged him to remain, but no words could induce him to stay. It was in vain they told him that winter was coming, and pointed out that snow had already fallen in the mountains; he said he could march on, with his knapsack on his back, in the wake of the slow-moving carriage, for which they would have to clear a path.

So he went away towards the mountains, and marched up them and down them. His strength was giving way, but still he saw no village, no house; he marched on towards the north. The stars gleamed above him, his feet stumbled, and his head grew dizzy. Deep in the valley stars were shining too, and it seemed as if there were another sky below him. He felt he was ill. The stars below him became more and more numerous, and glowed brighter and brighter, and moved to and fro. It

was a little town whose lights beamed there; and when he understood that, he exerted the remains of his strength, and at last reached the shelter of a humble inn.

That night and the whole of the following day he remained there, for his body required rest and refreshment. It was thawing; there was rain in the valley. But early on the second morning came a man with an organ, who played a tune of home; and now Knud could stay no longer. He continued his journey towards the north, marching onward for many days with haste and hurry, as if he were trying to get home before all were dead there; but to no one did he speak of his longing, for no one would have believed in the sorrow of his heart, the deepest a human heart can feel. Such a grief is not for the world, for it is not amusing; nor is it even for friends; and moreover he had no friends—a stranger, he wandered through strange lands towards his home in the north.

It was evening. He was walking on the public high-road. The frost began to make itself felt, and the country soon became flatter, containing mere field and meadow. By the road-side grew a great willow tree. Everything reminded him of home, and he sat down under the tree: he felt very tired, his head began to nod, and his eyes closed in slumber, but still he was conscious that the tree stretched its arms above him; and in his wandering fancy the tree itself appeared to be an old, mighty man—it seemed as if the "Willow-father" himself had taken up his tired son in his arms, and were carrying him back into the land of home, to the bare bleak shore of Kjöge, to the garden of his childhood. Yes, he dreamed it was the willow tree of Kjöge that had travelled out into the world to seek him, and that now had found him, and had led him back into the little garden by the streamlet, and there stood Joanna, in all her splendour, with the golden crown on her head, as he had seen her last, and she called out "welcome" to him.

And before him stood two remarkable shapes, which looked much more human than he remembered them to have been in his childhood: they had changed also, but they were still the two cakes that turned the right side towards him, and looked very well.

"We thank you," they said to Knud. "You have loosened our tongues, and have taught us that thoughts should be spoken out freely, or nothing will come of them; and now something has indeed come of it—we are betrothed."

Then they went hand in hand through the streets of Kjöge, and they looked very respectable in every way: there was no fault to find with *them*. And they went on, straight towards the church, and Knud and

Joanna followed them; they also were walking hand in hand; and the church stood there as it had always stood, with its red walls, on which the green ivy grew; and the great door of the church flew open, and the organ sounded, and they walked up the long aisle of the church. "Our master first," said the cake-couple, and made room for Joanna and Knud, who knelt by the altar, and she bent her head over him, and

KNUD AT REST—UNDER THE WILLOW TREE.

tears fell from her eyes, but they were icy cold, for it was the ice around her heart that was melting—melting by his strong love; and the tears fell upon his burning cheeks, and he awoke, and was sitting under the old willow tree in the strange land, in the cold wintry evening: an icy hail was falling from the clouds and beating on his face.

"That was the most delicious hour of my life!" he said, "and it was but a dream. Oh, let me dream again!" And he closed his eyes once more, and slept and dreamed.

Towards morning there was a great fall of snow. The wind drifted the snow over him, but he slept on. The villagers came forth to go to church, and by the road-side sat a journeyman. He was dead—frozen to death under the willow tree!

THE BEETLE.

THE emperor's favourite horse was shod with gold. It had a golden shoe on each of its feet.

And why was this?

He was a beautiful creature, with delicate legs, bright intelligent eyes, and a mane that hung down over his neck like a veil. He had carried his master through the fire and smoke of battle, and heard the bullets whistling around him; had kicked, bitten, and taken part in the fight when the enemy advanced, and had sprung with his master on his back over the fallen foe, and had saved the crown of red gold, and the life of the emperor, which was more valuable than the red gold; and that is why the emperor's horse had golden shoes.

And a beetle came creeping forth.

"First the great ones," said he, "and then the little ones; but greatness is not the only thing that does it." And so saying, he stretched out his thin legs.

"And pray what do you want?" asked the smith.

"Golden shoes, to be sure," replied the beetle.

"Why, you must be out of your senses," cried the smith. "Do you want to have golden shoes too?"

"Golden shoes? certainly," replied the beetle. "Am I not just as good as that big creature yonder, that is waited on, and brushed, and has meat and drink put before him? Don't I belong to the imperial stable?"

"But *why* is the horse to have golden shoes? Don't you understand that?" asked the smith.

"Understand? I understand that it is a personal slight offered to myself," cried the beetle. "It is done to annoy me, and therefore I am going into the world to seek my fortune."

"Go along!" said the smith.

"You 're a rude fellow!" cried the beetle; and then he went out of the stable, flew a little way, and soon afterwards found himself in a beautiful flower garden, all fragrant with roses and lavender.

"Is it not beautiful here?" asked one of the little lady-birds that flew about, with their delicate wings and their red-and-black shields on their backs. "How sweet it is here—how beautiful it is!"

"I 'm accustomed to better things," said the beetle. "Do you call *this* beautiful? Why, there is not so much as a dung-heap."

Then he went on, under the shadow of a great stack, and found a caterpillar crawling along.

"How beautiful the world is!" said the caterpillar: "the sun is so warm, and everything so enjoyable! And when I go to sleep, and die, as they call it, I shall wake up as a butterfly, with beautiful wings to fly with."

"How conceited you are!" exclaimed the stag-beetle. "Fly about as a butterfly, indeed! I 've come out of the stable of the emperor, and no one there, not even the emperor's favourite horse—that by the way wears my cast-off golden shoes—has any such idea. To have wings to fly! why, we can fly now;" and he spread his wings and flew away. "I don't want to be annoyed, and yet I am annoyed," he said, as he flew off.

Soon afterwards he fell down upon a great lawn. For awhile he lay there and feigned slumber; at last he fell asleep in earnest.

Suddenly a heavy shower of rain came falling from the clouds. The beetle woke up at the noise, and wanted to escape into the earth, but could not. He was tumbled over and over: sometimes he was swimming on his stomach, sometimes on his back, and as for flying, that was out of the question; he doubted whether he should escape from the place with his life. He therefore remained lying where he was.

When the weather had moderated a little, and the beetle had rubbed the water out of his eyes, he saw something gleaming. It was linen that had been placed there to bleach. He managed to make his way up to it, and crept into a fold of the damp linen. Certainly the place was not so comfortable to lie in as the warm stable; but there was no better to be had, and therefore he remained lying there for a whole day and a whole night, and the rain kept on during all the time. Towards morning he crept forth: he was very much out of temper about the climate.

On the linen two frogs were sitting. Their bright eyes absolutely gleamed with pleasure.

"Wonderful weather this!" one of them cried. "How refreshing! And the linen keeps the water together so beautifully. My hind legs seem to quiver as if I were going to swim."

"I should like to know," said the second, "if the swallow, who flies so far round, in her many journeys in foreign lands ever meets with a better climate than this. What delicious dampness! It is really as if one were lying in a wet ditch. Whoever does not rejoice in this, certainly does not love his fatherland."

"Have you been in the emperor's stable?" asked the beetle: "there the dampness is warm and refreshing. That 's the climate for me; but I cannot take it with me on my journey. Is there never a muck-heap, here in the garden, where a person of rank, like myself, can feel himself at home, and take up his quarters?"

But the frogs either did not or would not understand him.

"I never ask a question twice!" said the beetle, after he had already asked this one three times without receiving any answer.

Then he went a little farther, and stumbled against a fragment of pottery, that certainly ought not to have been lying there; but as it was once there, it gave a good shelter against wind and weather. Here dwelt several families of earwigs; and these did not require much, only sociality. The female members of the community were full of the purest maternal affection, and accordingly each one considered her own child the most beautiful and cleverest of all.

"Our son has engaged himself," said one mother. "Dear, innocent boy! His greatest hope is that he may creep one day into a clergyman's ear. It 's very artless and loveable, that; and being engaged will keep him steady. What joy for a mother!"

"Our son," said another mother, "had scarcely crept out of the egg, when he was already off on his travels. He 's all life and spirits; he 'll run his horns off! What joy that is for a mother! Is it not so, Mr. Beetle?" for she knew the stranger by his horny coat.

"You are both quite right," said he; so they begged him to walk in; that is to say, to come as far as he could under the bit of pottery.

"Now, you also see *my* little earwig," observed a third mother and a fourth; "they are lovely little things, and highly amusing. They are never ill-behaved, except when they are uncomfortable in their inside; but, unfortunately, one is very subject to that at their age."

Thus each mother spoke of her baby; and the babies talked among themselves, and made use of the little nippers they have in their tails to nip the beard of the beetle.

"Yes, they are always busy about something, the little rogues!" said the mothers; and they quite beamed with maternal pride; but the beetle felt bored by that, and therefore he inquired how far it was to the nearest muck-heap

"That is quite out in the big world, on the other side of the ditch," answered an earwig. "I hope none of my children will go so far, for it would be the death of me."

"But I shall try to get so far," said the beetle; and he went off without taking formal leave; for that is considered the polite thing to do. And by the ditch he met several friends; beetles, all of them.

"Here we live," they said. "We are very comfortable here. Might we ask you to step down into this rich mud? You must be fatigued after your journey."

"Certainly," replied the beetle. "I have been exposed to the rain, and have had to lie upon linen, and cleanliness is a thing that greatly exhausts me. I have also pains in one of my wings, from standing in a draught under a fragment of pottery. It is really quite refreshing to be among one's companions once more."

"Perhaps you come from some muck-heap?" observed the oldest of them.

"Indeed, I come from a much higher place," replied the beetle. "I came from the emperor's stable, where I was born with golden shoes on my feet. I am travelling on a secret embassy. You must not ask me any questions, for I can't betray my secret."

With this the beetle stepped down into the rich mud. There sat three young maiden beetles; and they tittered, because they did not know what to say.

"Not one of them is engaged yet," said their mother; and the beetle maidens tittered again, this time from embarrassment.

"I have never seen greater beauties in the royal stables," exclaimed the beetle, who was now resting himself.

"Don't spoil my girls," said the mother; "and don't talk to them, please, unless you have serious intentions. But of course your intentions are serious, and therefore I give you my blessing."

"Hurrah!" cried all the other beetles together; and our friend was engaged. Immediately after the betrothal came the marriage, for there was no reason for delay.

The following day passed very pleasantly, and the next in tolerable comfort; but on the third it was time to think of food for the wife, and perhaps also for children.

"I have allowed myself to be taken in," said our beetle to himself. "And now there's nothing for it but to take *them* in, in turn."

So said, so done. Away he went, and he stayed away all day, and stayed away all night; and his wife sat there, a forsaken widow.

"Oh," said the other beetles, "this fellow whom we received into our

THE SCHOLARS FIND THE BEETLE.

family is nothing more than a thorough vagabond. He has gone away, and has left his wife a burden upon our hands."

"Well, then, she shall be unmarried again, and sit here among my daughters," said the mother. "Fie on the villain who forsook her!"

In the meantime the beetle had been journeying on, and had sailed across the ditch on a cabbage leaf. In the morning two persons came to the ditch. When they saw him, they took him up, and turned him over and over, and looked very learned, especially one of them—a boy.

"Allah sees the black beetle in the black stone and in the black rock. Is not that written in the Koran?" Then he translated the beetle's

name into Latin, and enlarged upon the creature's nature and history. The second person, an older scholar, voted for carrying him home. He said they wanted just such good specimens; and this seemed an uncivil speech to our beetle, and in consequence he flew suddenly out of the speaker's hand. As he had now dry wings, he flew a tolerable distance, and reached a hot-bed, where a sash of the glass roof was partly open, so he quietly slipped in and buried himself in the warm earth.

"Very comfortable it is here," said he.

Soon after he went to sleep, and dreamed that the emperor's favourite horse had fallen, and had given him his golden shoes, with the promise that he should have two more.

That was all very charming. When the beetle woke up, he crept forth and looked around him. What splendour was in the hothouse! In the background great palm trees growing up on high; the sun made them look transparent; and beneath them what a luxuriance of green, and of beaming flowers, red as fire, yellow as amber, or white as fresh-fallen snow.

"This is an incomparable plenty of plants," cried the beetle. "How good they will taste when they are decayed! A capital store-room this! There must certainly be relations of mine living here. I will just see if I can find any one with whom I may associate. I'm proud, certainly, and I'm proud of being so." And so he prowled about in the earth, and thought what a pleasant dream that was about the dying horse, and the golden shoes he had inherited.

Suddenly a hand seized the beetle, and pressed him, and turned him round and round.

The gardener's little son and a companion had come to the hotbed, had espied the beetle, and wanted to have their fun with him. First he was wrapped in a vine leaf, and then put into warm trousers-pocket. He cribbled and crabbled about there with all his might; but he got a good pressing from the boy's hand for this, which served as a hint to him to keep quiet. Then the boy went rapidly towards the great lake that lay at the end of the garden. Here the beetle was put in an old broken wooden shoe, on which a little stick was placed upright for a mast, and to this mast the beetle was bound with a woollen thread. Now he was a sailor, and had to sail away.

The lake was not very large, but to the beetle it seemed an ocean; and he was so astonished at its extent, that he fell over on his back and kicked out with his legs.

The little ship sailed away. The current of the water seized it; but whenever it went too far from the shore, one of the boys turned up his

trousers and went in after it, and brought it back to the land. But at length, just as it went merrily out again, the two boys were called away, and very harshly, so that they hurried to obey the summons, ran away from the lake, and left the little ship to its fate. Thus it drove away from the shore, farther and farther into the open sea: it was terrible work for the beetle, for he could not get away in consequence of being bound to the mast.

Then a fly came and paid him a visit.

"What beautiful weather!" said the fly. "I'll rest here, and sun myself. You have an agreeable time of it."

"You speak without knowing the facts," replied the beetle. "Don't you see that I'm a prisoner?"

"Ah! but I'm not a prisoner," observed the fly; and he flew away accordingly.

"Well, now I know the world," said the beetle to himself. "It is an abominable world. I'm the only honest person in it. First, they refuse me my golden shoes; then I have to lie on wet linen, and to stand in the draught; and, to crown all, they fasten a wife upon me. Then, when I've taken a quick step out into the world, and found out how one can have it there, and how I wished to have it, one of those human boys comes and ties me up, and leaves me to the mercy of the wild waves, while the emperor's favourite horse prances about proudly in golden shoes. That is what annoys me more than all. But one must not look for sympathy in this world! My career has been very interesting; but what's the use of that, if nobody knows it? The world does not deserve to be made acquainted with my history, for it ought to have given me golden shoes, when the emperor's horse was shod, and I stretched out my feet to be shod too. If I had received golden shoes, I should have become an ornament to the stable. Now the stable has lost me, and the world has lost me. It is all over!"

But all was not over yet. A boat, in which there were a few young girls, came rowing up.

"Look, yonder is an old wooden shoe sailing along," said one of the girls.

"There's a little creature bound fast to it," said another.

The boat came quite close to our beetle's ship, and the young girls fished him out of the water. One of them drew a small pair of scissors from her pocket, and cut the woollen thread, without hurting the beetle; and when she stepped on shore, she put him down on the grass.

"Creep, creep—fly, fly—if thou canst," she said. "Liberty is a splendid thing."

And the beetle flew up, and straight through the open window of a great building; there he sank down, tired and exhausted, exactly on the mane of the emperor's favourite horse, who stood in the stable when he was at home, and the beetle also. The beetle clung fast to the mane, and sat there a short time to recover himself.

"Here I 'm sitting on the emperor's favourite horse—sitting on him just like the emperor himself!" he cried. "But what was I saying? Yes, now I remember. That 's a good thought, and quite correct. The smith asked me why the golden shoes were given to the horse. Now I 'm quite clear about the answer. They were given to the horse on *my* account."

And now the beetle was in a good temper again.

"Travelling expands the mind rarely," said he.

The sun's rays came streaming into the stable, and shone upon him, and made the place lively and bright.

"The world is not so bad, upon the whole," said the beetle; "but one must know how to take things as they come."

WHAT THE OLD MAN DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT.

I WILL tell you a story which was told to me when I was a little boy. Every time I thought of the story, it seemed to me to become more and more charming; for it is with stories as it is with many people—they become better as they grow older.

I take it for granted that you have been in the country, and seen a very old farmhouse with a thatched roof, and mosses and small plants growing wild upon the thatch. There is a stork's nest on the summit of the gable; for we can't do without the stork. The walls of the house are sloping, and the windows are low, and only one of the latter is made so that it will open. The baking-oven sticks out of the wall like a little fat body. The elder tree hangs over the paling, and beneath its branches, at the foot of the paling, is a pool of water in which a few ducks are disporting themselves. There is a yard-dog too, who barks at all comers.

Just such a farmhouse stood out in the country; and in this house dwelt an old couple—a peasant and his wife. Small as was their property, there was one article among it that they could do without—a

horse, which made a living out of the grass it found by the side of the high-road. The old peasant rode into the town on this horse; and often his neighbours borrowed it of him, and rendered the old couple some service in return for the loan of it. But they thought it would be best if they sold the horse, or exchanged it for something that might be more useful to them. But what might this *something* be?

"You 'll know that best, old man," said the wife. "It is fair-day to-day, so ride into town, and get rid of the horse for money, or make a good exchange: whichever you do will be right to me. Ride to the fair."

And she fastened his neckerchief for him, for she could do that better than he could; and she tied it in a double bow, for she could do that very prettily. Then she brushed his hat round and round with the palm of her hand, and gave him a kiss. So he rode away upon the horse that was to be sold or to be bartered for something else. Yes, the old man knew what he was about.

The sun shone hotly down, and not a cloud was to be seen in the sky. The road was very dusty, for many people who were all bound for the fair were driving, or riding, or walking upon it. There was no shelter anywhere from the sunbeams.

Among the rest, a man was trudging along, and driving a cow to the fair. The cow was as beautiful a creature as any cow can be.

"She gives good milk, I 'm sure," said the peasant. "That would be a very good exchange—the cow for the horse.

"Hallo, you there with the cow!" he said; "I tell you what—I fancy a horse costs more than a cow, but I don't care for that; a cow would be more useful to me. If you like, we 'll exchange."

"To be sure I will," said the man; and they exchanged accordingly.

So that was settled, and the peasant might have turned back, for he had done the business he came to do; but as he had once made up his mind to go to the fair, he determined to proceed, merely to have a look at it; and so he went on to the town with his cow.

Leading the animal, he strode sturdily on; and after a short time, he overtook a man who was driving a sheep. It was a good fat sheep, with a fine fleece on its back.

"I should like to have that fellow," said our peasant to himself. "He would find plenty of grass by our palings, and in the winter we could keep him in the room with us. Perhaps it would be more practical to have a sheep instead of a cow. Shall we exchange?"

The man with the sheep was quite ready, and the bargain was struck. So our peasant went on in the high-road with his sheep.

Soon he overtook another man, who came into the road from a field, carrying a great goose under his arm.

"That 's a heavy thing you have there. It has plenty of feathers and plenty of fat, and would look well tied to a string, and paddling in the water at our place. That would be something for my old woman; she could make all kinds of profit out of it. How often she has said, 'If we only had a goose!' Now, perhaps, she can have one; and, if possible, it shall be hers. Shall we exchange? I 'll give you my sheep for your goose, and thank you into the bargain."

The other man had not the least objection; and accordingly they exchanged, and our peasant became proprietor of the goose.

By this time he was very near the town. The crowd on the high-road became greater and greater; there was quite a crush of men and cattle. They walked in the road, and close by the palings; and at the barrier they even walked into the toll-man's potato-field, where his one fowl was strutting about, with a string to its leg, lest it should take fright at the crowd, and stray away, and so be lost. This fowl had short tail-feathers, and winked with both its eyes, and looked very cunning. "Cluck, cluck!" said the fowl. What it thought when it said this I cannot tell you; but directly our good man saw it, he thought, "That 's the finest fowl I 've ever seen in my life! Why, it 's finer than our parson's brood hen. On my word, I should like to have that fowl. A fowl can always find a grain or two, and can almost keep itself. I think it would be a good exchange if I could get that for my goose.

"Shall we exchange?" he asked the toll-taker.

"Exchange!" repeated the man; "well, that would not be a bad thing."

And so they exchanged; the toll-taker at the barrier kept the goose, and the peasant carried away the fowl.

Now, he had done a good deal of business on his way to the fair, and he was hot and tired. He wanted something to eat, and a glass of brandy to drink; and soon he was in front of the inn. He was just about to step in, when the hostler came out, so they met at the door. The hostler was carrying a sack.

"What have you in that sack?" asked the peasant.

"Rotten apples," answered the hostler; "a whole sackful of them — enough to feed the pigs with."

"Why, that 's terrible waste! I should like to take them to my old woman at home. Last year the old tree by the turf-hole only bore a single apple, and we kept it on the cupboard till it was quite rotten and spoilt. 'It was always property,' my old woman said; but here

THE OLD MAN RELATES HIS SUCCESS.

she could see a quantity of property — a whole sackful. Yes, I shall be glad to show them to her."

"What will you give me for the sackful?" asked the hostler.

"What will I give? I will give my fowl in exchange."

And he gave the fowl accordingly, and received the apples, which he carried into the guest-room. He leaned the sack carefully by the stove, and then went to the table. But the stove was hot: he had not thought of that. Many guests were present—horse dealers, ox-herds, and two Englishmen—and the two Englishmen were so rich that their pockets bulged out with gold coins, and almost burst; and they could bet too, as you shall hear.

Hiss-s-s! hiss-s-s! What was that by the stove? The apples were beginning to roast!

"What is that?"

"Why, do you know—," said our peasant.

And he told the whole story of the horse that he had changed for a cow, and all the rest of it, down to the apples.

"Well, your old woman will give it you well when you get home!" said one of the two Englishmen. "There will be a disturbance."

"What?—give me what?" said the peasant. "She will kiss me, and say, 'What the old man does is always right.'"

"Shall we wager?" said the Englishman. "We'll wager coined gold by the ton—a hundred pounds to the hundredweight!"

"A bushel will be enough," replied the peasant. "I can only set the bushel of apples against it; and I'll throw myself and my old woman into the bargain—and I fancy that's piling up the measure."

"Done—taken!"

And the bet was made. The host's carriage came up, and the Englishmen got in, and the peasant got in; away they went, and soon they stopped before the peasant's hut.

"Good evening, old woman."

"Good evening, old man."

"I've made the exchange."

"Yes, you understand what you're about," said the woman.

And she embraced him, and paid no attention to the stranger guests, nor did she notice the sack.

"I got a cow in exchange for the horse," said he.

"Heaven be thanked!" said she. "What glorious milk we shall have, and butter and cheese on the table! That was a capital exchange!"

"Yes, but I changed the cow for a sheep."

"Ah, that's better still!" cried the wife. "You always think of everything: we have just pasture enough for a sheep. Ewe's-milk and

cheese, and woollen jackets and stockings! The cow cannot give those, and her hairs will only come off. How you think of everything!"

"But I changed away the sheep for a goose."

"Then this year we shall really have roast goose to eat, my dear old man. You are always thinking of something to give me pleasure. How charming that is! We can let the goose walk about with a string to her leg, and she 'll grow fatter still before we roast her."

"But I gave away the goose for a fowl," said the man.

"A fowl? That was a good exchange!" replied the woman. "The fowl will lay eggs and hatch them, and we shall have chickens: we shall have a whole poultry-yard! Oh, that 's just what I was wishing for."

"Yes, but I exchanged the fowl for a sack of shrivelled apples."

"What! — I must positively kiss you for that," exclaimed the wife. My dear, good husband! Now, I 'll tell you something. Do you know, you had hardly left me this morning, before I began thinking how I could give you something very nice this evening. I thought it should be pancakes with savoury herbs. I had eggs, and bacon too; but I wanted herbs. So I went over to the schoolmaster's—they have herbs there, I know — but the schoolmistress is a mean woman, though she looks so sweet. I begged her to lend me a handful of herbs. 'Lend!' she answered me; 'nothing at all grows in our garden, not even a shrivelled apple. I could not even lend you a shrivelled apple, my dear woman.' But now *I* can lend *her* ten, or a whole sackful. That I 'm very glad of; that makes me laugh!" And with that she gave him a sounding kiss.

"I like that!" exclaimed both the Englishmen together. "Always going down-hill, and always merry; that 's worth the money." So they paid a hundredweight of gold to the peasant, who was not scolded, but kissed.

Yes, it always pays, when the wife sees and always asserts that her husband knows best, and that whatever he does is right.

You see, that is my story. I heard it when I was a child; and now you have heard it too, and know that "What the old man does is always right."

THE WIND TELLS ABOUT WALDEMAR DAA AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

When the wind sweeps across the grass, the field has a ripple like a pond, and when it sweeps across the corn the field waves to and fro like a high sea. That is called the wind's dance; but the wind does not dance only, he also tells stories; and how loudly he can sing out of his deep chest, and how different it sounds in the tree-tops in the forest, and through the loopholes and clefts and cracks in walls! Do you see how the wind drives the clouds up yonder, like a frightened flock of sheep? Do you hear how the wind howls down here through the open valley, like a watchman blowing his horn? With wonderful tones he whistles and screams down the chimney and into the fireplace. The fire crackles and flares up, and shines far into the room, and the little place is warm and snug, and it is pleasant to sit there listening to the sounds. Let the wind speak, for he knows plenty of stories and fairy tales, many more than are known to any of us. Just hear what the wind can tell.

Huh—uh—ush! roar along! That is the burden of the song.

"By the shores of the Great Belt, one of the straits that unite the Cattegut with the Baltic, lies an old mansion with thick red walls," says the Wind. "I know every stone in it; I saw it when it still belonged to the castle of Marsk Stig on the promontory. But it had to be pulled down, and the stone was used again for the walls of a new mansion in another place, the baronial mansion of Borreby, which still stands by the coast.

"I knew them, the noble lords and ladies, the changing races that dwelt there, and now I'm going to tell about Waldemar Daa and his daughters. How proudly he carried himself—he was of royal blood! He could do more than merely hunt the stag and empty the wine-can. 'It *shall* be done,' he was accustomed to say.

"His wife walked proudly in gold-embroidered garments over the polished marble floors. The tapestries were gorgeous, the furniture was expensive and artistically carved. She had brought gold and silver plate with her into the house, and there was German beer in the cellar. Black fiery horses neighed in the stables. There was a wealthy look about the house of Borreby at that time, when wealth was still at home there.

"Four children dwelt there also; three delicate maidens, Ida, Joanna, and Anna Dorothea: I have never forgotten their names.

"They were rich people, noble people, born in affluence, nurtured in affluence.

"Huh—sh! roar along!" sang the Wind; and then he continued:

"I did not see here, as in other great noble houses, the high-born lady sitting among her women in the great hall turning the spinning-wheel: here she swept the sounding chords of the cithern, and sang to the sound, but not always old Danish melodies, but songs of a strange land. It was 'live and let live' here: stranger guests came from far and near, the music sounded, the goblets clashed, and I was not able to drown the noise," said the Wind. "Ostentation, and haughtiness, and splendour, and display, and rule were there, but the fear of the Lord was not there.

"And it was just on the evening of the first day of May," the Wind continued. "I came from the west, and had seen how the ships were being crushed by the waves, with all on board, and flung on the west coast of Jutland. I had hurried across the heath, and over Jutland's wood-girt eastern coast, and over the Island of Fünen, and now I drove over the Great Belt, groaning and sighing.

"Then I lay down to rest on the shore of Seeland, in the neighbourhood of the great house of Borreby, where the forest, the splendid oak forest, still rose.

"The young men-servants of the neighbourhood were collecting branches and brushwood under the oak trees; the largest and driest they could find they carried into the village, and piled them up in a heap, and set them on fire; and men and maids danced, singing in a circle round the blazing pile.

"I lay quite quiet," continued the Wind; "but I silently touched a branch, which had been brought by the handsomest of the men-servants, and the wood blazed up brightly, blazed up higher than all the rest; and now he was the chosen one, and bore the name the Street-goat, and might choose his Street-lamb first from among the maids; and there was mirth and rejoicing, greater than I had ever heard before in the halls of the rich baronial mansion.

"And the noble lady drove towards the baronial mansion, with her three daughters, in a gilded carriage drawn by six horses. The daughters were young and fair—three charming blossoms, rose, lily, and pale hyacinth. The mother was a proud tulip, and never acknowledged the salutation of one of the men or maids who paused in their sport to do her honour: the gracious lady seemed a flower that was rather stiff in the stalk.

"Rose, lily, and pale hyacinth; yes, I saw them all three! Whose lambkins will they one day become? thought I; their Street-goat will be a gallant knight, perhaps a prince. Huh—sh! hurry along! hurry along!

"Yes, the carriage rolled on with them, and the peasant people resumed their dancing. They rode that summer through all the villages round about. But in the night, when I rose again," said the Wind, "the very noble lady lay down, to rise again no more: that thing came upon her which comes upon all—there is nothing new in that.

"Waldemar Daa stood for a space silent and thoughtful. 'The proudest tree can be bowed without being broken,' said a voice within him. His daughters wept, and all the people in the mansion wiped their eyes; but Lady Daa had driven away—and I drove away too, and rushed along, huh—sh!" said the Wind.

"I returned again; I often returned again over the Island of Fünen, and the shores of the Belt, and I sat down by Borreby, by the splendid oak wood; there the heron made his nest, and wood-pigeons haunted the place, and blue ravens, and even the black stork. It was still spring; some of them were yet sitting on their eggs, others had already hatched their young. But how they flew up, how they cried! The axe sounded, blow on blow: the wood was to be felled. Waldemar Daa wanted to build a noble ship, a man-of-war, a three-decker, which the king would be sure to buy; and therefore the wood must be felled, the landmark of the seamen, the refuge of the birds. The hawk started up and flew away, for its nest was destroyed; the heron and all the birds of the forest became homeless, and flew about in fear and in anger: I could well understand how they felt. Crows and ravens croaked aloud as if in scorn. 'Crack, crack! the nest cracks, cracks, cracks!'

"Far in the interior of the wood, where the noisy swarm of labourers were working, stood Waldemar Daa and his three daughters; and all laughed at the wild cries of the birds; only one, the youngest, Anna Dorothea, felt grieved in her heart; and when they made preparations to fell a tree that was almost dead, and on whose naked branches the black stork had built his nest, whence the little storks were stretching out their heads, she begged for mercy for the little things, and tears came into her eyes. Therefore the tree with the black stork's nest was left standing. The tree was not worth speaking of.

"There was a great hewing and sawing, and a three-decker was built. The architect was of low origin, but of great pride; his eyes and forehead told how clever he was, and Waldemar Daa was fond of listening

to him, and so was Waldemar's daughter Ida, the eldest, who was now fifteen years old; and while he built a ship for the father, he was building for himself an airy castle, into which he and Ida were to go as a married couple—which might indeed have happened, if the castle with stone walls, and ramparts, and moats had remained. But in spite of his wise head, the architect remained but a poor bird; and, indeed, what business has a sparrow to take part in a dance of peacocks? Huh—sh! I careered away, and he careered away too, for he was not allowed to stay; and little Ida got over it, because she was obliged to get over it.

"The proud black horses were neighing in the stable; they were worth looking at, and accordingly they *were* looked at. The admiral, who had been sent by the king himself to inspect the new ship and take measures for its purchase, spoke loudly in admiration of the beautiful horses.

"I heard all that," said the Wind. "I accompanied the gentlemen through the open door, and strewed blades of straw like bars of gold before their feet. Waldemar Daa wanted to have gold, and the admiral wished for the proud black horses, and that is why he praised them so much; but the hint was not taken, and consequently the ship was not bought. It remained on the shore covered over with boards, a Noah's ark that never got to the water—Huh—sh! rush away! away!—and that was a pity.

"In the winter, when the fields were covered with snow, and the water with large blocks of ice that I blew up on to the coast," continued the Wind, "crows and ravens came, all as black as might be, great flocks of them, and alighted on the dead, deserted, lonely ship by the shore, and croaked in hoarse accents of the wood that was no more, of the many pretty bird's nests destroyed, and the little ones left without a home; and all for the sake of that great bit of lumber, that proud ship that never sailed forth.

"I made the snow-flakes whirl, and the snow lay like a great lake high around the ship, and drifted over it. I let it hear my voice, that it might know what a storm has to say. Certainly I did my part towards teaching it seamanship. Huh—sh! push along!

"And the winter passed away; winter and summer, both passed away, and they are still passing away, even as I pass away; as the snow whirls along, and the apple blossom whirls along, and the leaves fall—away! away! away! and men are passing away too!

"But the daughters were still young, and little Ida was a rose, as fair to look upon as on the day when the architect saw her. I often

seized her long brown hair, when she stood in the garden by the apple tree, musing, and not heeding how I strewed blossoms on her hair, and loosened it, while she was gazing at the red sun and the golden sky, through the dark underwood and the trees of the garden.

"Her sister was bright and slender as a lily. Joanna had height and deportment, but was like her mother, rather stiff in the stalk. She was very fond of walking through the great hall, where hung the portraits of her ancestors. The women were painted in dresses of silk and velvet, with a tiny little hat, embroidered with pearls, on their plaited hair. They were handsome women. The gentlemen were represented clad in steel, or in costly cloaks lined with squirrel's skin; they wore little ruffs, and swords at their sides, but not buckled to their hips. Where would Joanna's picture find its place on that wall some day? and how would *he* look, her noble lord and husband? This is what she thought of, and of this she spoke softly to herself. I heard it, as I swept into the long hall, and turned round to come out again.

"Anna Dorothea, the pale hyacinth, a child of fourteen, was quiet and thoughtful; her great deep blue eyes had a musing look, but the childlike smile still played around her lips: I was not able to blow it away, nor did I wish to do so.

"We met in the garden, in the hollow lane, in the field and meadow; she gathered herbs and flowers which she knew would be useful to her father in concocting the drinks and drops he distilled. Waldemar Daa was arrogant and proud, but he was also a learned man, and knew a great deal. That was no secret, and many opinions were expressed concerning it. In his chimney there was fire even in summer time. He would lock the door of his room, and for days the fire would be poked and raked; but of this he did not talk much—the forces of nature must be conquered in silence; and soon he would discover the art of making the best thing of all—the red gold.

"That is why the chimney was always smoking, therefore the flames crackled so frequently. Yes, I was there too," said the Wind. "Let it go, I sang down through the chimney: it will end in smoke, air, coals and ashes! You will burn yourself! Hu-uh-ush! drive away! drive away! But Waldemar Daa did *not* drive it away."

"The splendid black horses in the stable—what became of them? what became of the old gold and silver vessels in cupboards and chests, the cows in the fields, and the house and home itself? Yes, they may melt, may melt in the golden crucible, and yet yield no gold.

"Empty grew the barns and store-rooms, the cellars and magazines. The servants decreased in number, and the mice multiplied. Then a

window broke, and then another, and I could get in elsewhere besides at the door," said the Wind. "'Where the chimney smokes the meal is being cooked,' the proverb says. But here the chimney smoked that devoured all the meals, for the sake of the red gold.

"I blew through the courtyard-gate like a watchman blowing his horn," the Wind went on, "but no watchman was there. I twirled the weathercock round on the summit of the tower, and it creaked like the snoring of the warder, but no warder was there; only mice and rats were there. Poverty laid the tablecloth; poverty sat in the wardrobe and in the larder; the door fell off its hinges, cracks and fissures made their appearance, and I went in and out at pleasure; and that is how I know all about it.

"Amid smoke and ashes, amid sorrow and sleepless nights, the hair and beard of the master turned grey, and deep furrows showed themselves around his temples; his skin turned pale and yellow, as his eyes looked greedily for the gold, the desired gold.

"I blew the smoke and ashes into his face and beard: the result of his labour was debt instead of pelf. I sung through the burst window-panes and the yawning clefts in the walls. I blew into the chests of drawers belonging to the daughters, wherein lay the clothes that had become faded and threadbare from being worn over and over again. That was not the song that had been sung at the children's cradle. The lordly life had changed to a life of penury. I was the only one who rejoiced aloud in that castle," said the Wind. "I snowed them up, and they say snow keeps people warm. They had no wood, and the forest from which they might have brought it was cut down. It was a biting frost. I rushed in through loopholes and passages, over gables and roofs, that I might be brisk. They were lying in bed because of the cold, the three high-born daughters; and their father was crouching under his leathern coverlet. Nothing to bite, nothing to break, no fire on the hearth—there was a life for high-born people! Huh-sh, let it go! But that is what my Lord Daa could *not* do—he could *not* let it go.

"'After winter comes spring,' he said. 'After want, good times will come: one must not lose patience; one must learn to wait! Now my house and lands are mortgaged, it is indeed high time; and the gold will soon come. At Easter!'

"I heard how he spoke thus, looking at a spider's web. 'Thou cunning little weaver, thou dost teach me perseverance. Let them tear thy web, and thou wilt begin it again, and complete it. Let them destroy it again, and thou wilt resolutely begin to work again—again! That is what we must do, and that will repay itself at last.'

"It was the morning of Easter-day. The bells sounded from the neighbouring church, and the sun seemed to rejoice in the sky. The master had watched through the night in feverish excitement, and had been melting and cooling, distilling and mixing. I heard him sighing like a soul in despair; I heard him praying, and I noticed how he held his breath. The lamp was burnt out, but he did not notice it. I blew at the fire of coals, and it threw its red glow upon his ghastly white face, lighting it up with a glare, and his sunken eyes looked forth wildly out of their deep sockets—but they became larger and larger, as though they would burst.

"Look at the alchymic glass! It glows in the crucible, red-hot, and pure and heavy! He lifted it with a trembling hand, and cried with a trembling voice, 'Gold! gold!'

"He was quite dizzy—I could have blown him down," said the Wind; "but I only fanned the glowing coals, and accompanied him through the door to where his daughters sat shivering. His coat was powdered with ashes, and there were ashes in his beard and in his tangled hair. He stood straight up, and held his costly treasure on high, in the brittle glass. 'Found, found!—Gold, gold!' he shouted, and again held aloft the glass to let it flash in the sunshine; but his hand trembled, and the alchymic glass fell clattering to the ground, and broke into a thousand pieces; and the last bubble of his happiness had burst! Hu-uh-ush! rushing away!—and I rushed away from the gold-maker's house.

"Late in autumn, when the days are short, and the mist comes and strews cold drops upon the berries and leafless branches, I came back in fresh spirits, rushed through the air, swept the sky clear, and snapped the dry twigs—which is certainly no great labour, but yet it must be done. Then there was another kind of sweeping clean at Waldemar Daa's, in the mansion of Borreby. His enemy, Owe Rainel, of Basnäs, was there with the mortgage of the house and everything it contained in his pocket. I drummed against the broken window-panes, beat against the old rotten doors, and whistled through cracks and rifts—huh-sh! Mr. Owe Rainel did not like staying there. Ida and Anna Dorothea wept bitterly; Joanna stood pale and proud, and bit her thumb till it bled—but what could that avail? Owe Rainel offered to allow Waldemar Daa to remain in the mansion till the end of his life, but no thanks were given him for his offer. I listened to hear what occurred. I saw the ruined gentleman lift his head and throw it back prouder than ever, and I rushed against the house and the old lime trees with such force, that one of the thickest branches broke, one that was not decayed; and the

LEAVING THE OLD HOME.

branch remained lying at the entrance as a broom when any one wanted to sweep the place out: and a grand sweeping out there was—I thought it would be so.

"It was hard on that day to preserve one's composure; but their will was as hard as their fortune.

"There was nothing they could call their own except the clothes they wore: yes, there was one thing more—the alchymist's glass, a new one that had lately been bought, and filled with what had been gathered up from the ground of the treasure which promised so much but never kept

its promise. Waldermar Daa hid the glass in his bosom, and taking his stick in his hand, the once rich gentleman passed with his daughters out of the house of Borreby. I blew cold upon his heated cheeks, I stroked his grey beard and his long white hair, and I sang as well as I could,—'Huh-sh! gone away! gone away!' And that was the end of the wealth and splendour.

"Ida walked on one side of the old man, and Anna Dorothea on the other. Joanna turned round at the entrance—why? Fortune would not turn because she did so. She looked at the old walls of what had once been the castle of Marsk Stig, and perhaps she thought of his daughters:

"'The eldest gave the youngest her hand,
And forth they went to the far-off land.'

Was she thinking of this old song? Here were three of them, and their father was with them too. They walked along the road on which they had once driven in their splendid carriage—they walked forth as beggars, with their father, and wandered out into the open field, and into a mud hut, which they rented for a dollar and a half a year—into their new house with the empty rooms and empty vessels. Crows and magpies fluttered above them, and cried, as if in contempt, 'Craw! craw! out of the nest! craw! craw!' as they had done in the wood at Borreby when the trees were felled.

"Daa and his daughters could not help hearing it. I blew about their ears, for what use would it be that they should listen?

"And they went to live in the mud hut on the open field, and I wandered away over moor and field, through bare bushes and leafless forests, to the open waters, the free shores, to other lands—huh-uh-ush! —away, away! year after year!"

And how did Waldemar Daa and his daughters prosper? The Wind tells us:

"The one I saw last, yes, for the last time, was Anna Dorothea, the pale hyacinth: then she was old and bent, for it was fifty years afterwards. She lived longer than the rest; she knew all.

"Yonder on the heath, by the Jutland town of Wiborg, stood the fine new house of the canon, built of red bricks with projecting gables; the smoke came up thickly from the chimney. The canon's gentle lady and her beautiful daughters sat in the bay window, and looked over the hawthorn hedge of the garden towards the brown heath. What were they looking at? Their glances rested upon the stork's nest without,

and on the hut, which was almost falling in; the roof consisted of moss and houseleek, in so far as a roof existed there at all—the stork's nest covered the greater part of it, and that alone was in proper condition, for it was kept in order by the stork himself.

"That is a house to be looked at, but not to be touched; I must deal gently with it," said the Wind. "For the sake of the stork's nest the hut has been allowed to stand, though it was a blot upon the landscape. They did not like to drive the stork away, therefore the old shed was left standing, and the poor woman who dwelt in it was allowed to stay: she had the Egyptian bird to thank for that; or was it perchance her reward, because she had once interceded for the nest of its black brother in the forest of Borreby? At that time she, the poor woman, was a young child, a pale hyacinth in the rich garden. She remembered all that right well, did Anna Dorothea.

"'Oh! oh!' Yes, people can sigh like the wind moaning in the rushes and reeds. 'Oh! oh!' she sighed, "no bells sounded at thy burial, Waldemar Daa! The poor schoolboys did not even sing a psalm when the former lord of Borreby was laid in the earth to rest! Oh, everything has an end, even misery. Sister Ida became the wife of a peasant. That was the hardest trial that befell our father, that the husband of a daughter of his should be a miserable serf, whom the proprietor could mount on the wooden horse for punishment! I suppose he is under the ground now. And thou, Ida? Alas, alas! it is not ended yet, wretch that I am! Grant me that I may die, kind Heaven!'

"That was Anna Dorothea's prayer in the wretched hut which was left standing for the sake of the stork.

"I took pity on the fairest of the sisters," said the Wind. "Her courage was like that of a man, and in man's clothes she took service as a sailor on board of a ship. She was sparing of words, and of a dark countenance, but willing at her work. But she did not know how to climb; so I blew her overboard before anybody found out that she was a woman, and according to my thinking that was well done!" said the Wind.

"On such an Easter morning as that on which Waldemar Daa had fancied that he had found the red gold, I heard the tones of a psalm under the stork's nest, among the crumbling walls—it was Anna Dorothea's last song.

"There was no window, only a hole in the wall. The sun rose up like a mass of gold, and looked through. What a splendour he diffused! Her eyes were breaking, and her heart was breaking—but that they

would have done, even if the sun had not shone that morning on Anna Dorothea.

"The stork covered her hut till her death. I sang at her grave!" said the Wind. "I sang at her father's grave; I know where his grave is, and where hers is, and noboby else knows it.

"New times, changed times! The old high-road now runs through cultivated fields; the new road winds among the trim ditches, and soon the railway will come with its train of carriages, and rush over the graves which are forgotten like the names—hu-ush! passed away, passed away!

"That is the story of Waldemar Daa and his daughters. Tell it better, any of you, if you know how," said the Wind, and turned away—and he was gone.

IB AND CHRISTINE.

Not far from the clear stream Gudenau, in North Jutland, in the forest which extends by its banks and far into the country, a great ridge of land rises and stretches along like a wall through the wood. By this ridge, westward, stands a farmhouse, surrounded by poor land; the sandy soil is seen through the spare rye and wheat-ears that grow upon it. Some years have elapsed since the time of which we speak. The people who lived here cultivated the fields, and moreover kept three sheep, a pig, and two oxen; in fact, they supported themselves quite comfortably, for they had enough to live on if they took things as they came. Indeed, they could have managed to save enough to keep two horses; but, like the other peasants of the neighbourhood, they said, "The horse eats itself up"—that is to say, it eats as much as it earns. Jeppe-Jäns cultivated his field in summer. In the winter he made wooden shoes, and then he had an assistant, a journeyman, who understood as well as he himself did how to make the wooden shoes strong, and light, and graceful. They carved shoes and spoons, and that brought in money. It would have been wronging the Jeppe-Jänses to call them poor people.

Little Ib, a boy seven years old, the only child of the family, would sit by, looking at the workmen, cutting at a stick, and occasionally cutting his finger. But one day Ib succeeded so well with two pieces

of wood, that they really looked like little wooden shoes; and these he wanted to give to little Christine. And who was little Christine? She was the boatman's daughter, and was graceful and delicate as a gentleman's child; had she been differently dressed, no one would have imagined that she came out of the hut on the neighbouring heath. There lived her father, who was a widower, and supported himself by carrying firewood in his great boat out of the forest to the estate of Silkeborg, with its great eel-pond and eel-weir, and sometimes even to the distant little town of Randers. He had no one who could take care of little Christine, and therefore the child was almost always with him in his boat, or in the forest among the heath plants and barberry bushes. Sometimes, when he had to go as far as the town, he would bring little Christine, who was a year younger than Ib, to stay at the Jeppe-Jänses.

Ib and Christine agreed very well in every particular: they divided their bread and berries when they were hungry, they dug in the ground together for treasures, and they ran, and crept, and played about everywhere. And one day they ventured together up the high ridge, and a long way into the forest; once they found a few snipes' eggs there, and that was a great event for them.

Ib had never been on the heath where Christine's father lived, nor had he ever been on the river. But even this was to happen; for Christine's father once invited him to go with them; and on the evening before the excursion, he followed the boatman over the heath to the house of the latter.

Next morning early, the two children were sitting high up on the pile of firewood in the boat, eating bread and whistleberries. Christine's father and his assistant propelled the boat with staves. They had the current with them, and swiftly they glided down the stream, through the lakes it forms in its course, and which sometimes seemed shut in by reeds and water plants, though there was always room for them to pass, and though the old trees bent quite forward over the water, and the old oaks bent down their bare branches, as if they had turned up their sleeves and wanted to show their knotty naked arms. Old alder trees, which the stream had washed away from the bank, clung with their fibrous roots to the bottom of the stream, and looked like little wooded islands. The water-lilies rocked themselves on the river. It was a splendid excursion; and at last they came to the great eel-weir, where the water rushed through the floodgates; and Ib and Christine thought this was beautiful to behold.

In those days there was no manufactory there, nor was there any town; only the old great farmyard, with its scanty fields, with few

servants and a few head of cattle, could be seen there; and the rushing of the water through the weir and the cry of the wild ducks were the only signs of life in Silkeborg. After the firewood had been unloaded, the father of Christine bought a whole bundle of eels and a slaughtered sucking-pig, and all was put into a basket and placed in the stern of the boat. Then they went back again up the stream; but the wind was favourable, and when the sails were hoisted, it was as good as if two horses had been harnessed to the boat.

When they had arrived at a point in the stream where the assistant-boatman dwelt, a little way from the bank, the boat was moored, and the two men landed, after exhorting the children to sit still. But the children did not do that; or at least they obeyed only for a very short time. They must be peeping into the basket in which the eels and the sucking-pig had been placed, and they must needs pull the sucking-pig out, and take it in their hands, and feel and touch it all over; and as both wanted to hold it at the same time, it came to pass that they let it fall into the water, and the sucking-pig drifted away with the stream—and here was a terrible event!

Ib jumped ashore, and ran a little distance along the bank, and Christine sprang after him.

"Take me with you!" she cried.

And in a few minutes they were deep in the thicket, and could no longer see either the boat or the bank. They ran on a little farther, and then Christine fell down on the ground and began to cry; but Ib picked her up.

"Follow me!" he cried. "Yonder lies the house."

But the house was not yonder. They wandered on and on, over the dry, rustling, last year's leaves, and over fallen branches that crackled beneath their feet. Soon they heard a loud piercing scream. They stood still and listened, and presently the scream of an eagle sounded through the wood. It was an ugly scream, and they were frightened at it; but before them, in the thick wood, the most beautiful blueberries grew in wonderful profusion. They were so inviting, that the children could not do otherwise than stop; and they lingered for some time, eating the blueberries till they had quite blue mouths and blue cheeks. Now again they heard the cry they had heard before.

"We shall get into trouble about the pig," said Christine.

"Come, let us go to our house," said Ib; "it is here in the wood."

And they went forward. They presently came to a wood, but it did not lead them home; and darkness came on, and they were afraid. The wonderful stillness that reigned around was interrupted now and then

IB AND CHRISTINE MEET THE GIPSY.

by the shrill cries of the great horrid owl and of the birds that were strange to them. At last they both lost themselves in a thicket. Christine cried, and Ib cried too; and after they had bemoaned themselves for a time, they threw themselves down on the dry leaves, and went fast asleep.

The sun was high in the heavens when the two children awoke. They were cold; but in the neighbourhood of this resting-place, on the hill, the sun shone through the trees, and there they thought they would warm themselves; and from there Ib fancied they would be able to see his parents' house. But they were far away from the house in question, in quite another part of the forest. They clambered to the top of the rising ground, and found themselves on the summit of a slope running down to the margin of a transparent lake. They could see fish in great numbers in the pure water illumined by the sun's rays. This spectacle was quite a sudden surprise for them; but close beside them grew a nut bush covered with the finest nuts; and now they picked the nuts, and cracked them, and ate the delicate young kernels, which had only just become perfect. But there was another surprise and another fright in store for them. Out of the thicket stepped a tall old woman; her face was quite brown, and her hair was deep black and shining. The whites of her eyes gleamed like a negro's; on her back she carried a bundle, and in her hand she bore a knotted stick. She was a gipsy. The children did not at once understand what she said. She brought three nuts out of her pocket, and told them that in these nuts the most beautiful, the loveliest things were hidden; for they were wishing-nuts.

Ib looked at her, and she seemed so friendly, that he plucked up courage and asked her if she would give him the nuts; and the woman gave them to him, and gathered some more for herself, a whole pocketful, from the nut bush.

And Ib and Christine looked at the wishing-nuts with great eyes.

"Is there a carriage with a pair of horses in this nut?" he asked.

"Yes, there's a golden carriage with two horses," answered the woman.

"Then give me the nut," said little Christine.

And Ib gave it to her, and the strange woman tied it in her pocket-handkerchief for her.

"Is there in this nut a pretty little neckerchief, like the one Christine wears round her neck?" inquired Ib.

"There are ten neckerchiefs in it," answered the woman. "There are beautiful dresses in it, and stockings, and a hat with a veil."

"Then I will have that one too," cried little Christine.

And Ib gave her the second nut also. The third was a little black thing.

"That one you can keep," said Christine; "and it is a pretty one too."

"What is in it?" inquired Ib.

"The best of all things for you," replied the gipsy-woman.

And Ib held the nut very tight. The woman promised to lead the children into the right path, so that they might find their way home; and now they went forward, certainly in quite a different direction from the path they should have followed. But that is no reason why we should suspect the gipsy-woman of wanting to steal the children. In the wild wood-path they met the forest bailiff, who knew Ib; and by his help, Ib and Christine both arrived at home, where their friends had been very anxious about them. They were pardoned and forgiven, although they had indeed both deserved "to get into trouble;" firstly, because they had let the sucking-pig fall into the water, and secondly, because they had run away.

Christine was taken back to her father on the heath, and Ib remained in the farmhouse on the margin of the wood by the great ridge. The first thing he did in the evening was to bring forth out of his pocket the little black nut, in which "the best thing of all" was said to be enclosed. He placed it carefully in the crack of the door, and then shut the door so as to break the nut; but there was not much kernel in it. The nut looked as if it were filled with tobacco or black rich earth; it was what we call hollow, or worm-eaten.

"Yes, that's exactly what I thought," said Ib. "How could the very best thing be contained in this little nut? And Christine will get just as little out of her two nuts, and will have neither fine clothes nor the golden carriage."

And winter came on, and the new year began; indeed, several years went by.

Ib was at last to be confirmed; and for this reason he went during a whole winter to the clergyman, far away in the nearest village, to prepare. About this time the boatman one day visited Ib's parents, and told them that Christine was now going into service, and that she had been really fortunate in getting a remarkably good place, and falling into worthy hands.

"Only think," he said; "she is going to the rich innkeeper's, in the inn at Herning, far towards the west, many miles from here. She is to assist the hostess in keeping the house; and afterwards, if she takes to it well, and stays to be confirmed there, the people are going to adopt her as their own daughter."

And Ib and Christine took leave of one another. People called them "the betrothed;" and at parting, the girl showed Ib that she had still the two nuts which he had given her long ago, during their wanderings

in the forest; and she told him, moreover, that in a drawer she had carefully kept the little wooden shoes which he had carved as a present for her in their childish days. And thereupon they parted.

Ib was confirmed. But he remained in his mother's house, for he had become a clever maker of wooden shoes, and in summer he looked after the field. He did it all alone, for his mother kept no farm-servant, and his father had died long ago.

Only seldom he got news of Christine from some passing postillion or eel-fisher. But she was well off at the rich innkeeper's; and after she had been confirmed, she wrote a letter to her father, and sent a kind message to Ib and his mother; and in the letter there was mention made of certain linen garments and a fine new gown, which Christine had received as a present from her employers. This was certainly good news.

Next spring, there was a knock one day at the door of our Ibis old mother, and behold, the boatman and Christine stepped into the room. She had come on a visit to spend a day: a carriage had to come from the Herning Inn to the next village, and she had taken the opportunity to see her friends once again. She looked as handsome as a real lady, and she had a pretty gown on, which had been well sewn, and made expressly for her. There she stood, in grand array, and Ib was in his working clothes. He could not utter a word: he certainly seized her hand, and held it fast in his own, and was heartily glad; but he could not get his tongue to obey him. Christine was not embarrassed, however, for she went on talking and talking, and, moreover, kissed Ib on his mouth in the heartiest manner.

"Did you know me again directly, Ib?" she asked; but even afterwards, when they were left quite by themselves, and he stood there still holding her hand in his, he could only say:

"You look quite like a real lady, and I am so uncouth. How often I have thought of you, Christine, and of the old times!"

And arm in arm they sauntered up the great ridge, and looked across the stream towards the heath, towards the great hills overgrown with bloom. It was perfectly silent; but by the time they parted it had grown quite clear to him that Christine must be his wife. Had they not, even in their childhood, been called the betrothed pair? To him they seemed to be really engaged to each other, though neither of them had spoken a word on the subject. Only for a few more hours could they remain together, for Christine was obliged to go back into the next village, from whence the carriage was to start early next morning for Herning. Her father and Ib escorted her as far as the village. It was

a fair moonlight evening, and when they reached their destination, and Ib still held Christine's hand in his own, he could not make up his mind to let her go. His eyes brightened, but still the words came halting over his lips. Yet they came from the depths of his heart, when he said:

"If you have not become too grand, Christine, and if you can make up your mind to live with me in my mother's house as my wife, we must become a wedded pair some day; but we can wait awhile yet."

"Yes, let us wait for a time, Ib," she replied; and he kissed her lips. "I confide in you, Ib," said Christine; "and I think that I love you—but I will sleep upon it."

And with that they parted. And on the way home Ib told the boatman that he and Christine were as good as betrothed; and the boatman declared he had always expected it would turn out so; and he went home with Ib, and remained that night in the young man's house; but nothing further was said of the betrothal.

A year passed by, in the course of which two letters were exchanged between Ib and Christine. The signature was prefaced by the words, "Faithful till death!" One day the boatman came in to Ib, and brought him a greeting from Christine. What he had further to say was brought out in somewhat hesitating fashion, but it was to the effect that Christine was almost more than prosperous, for she was a pretty girl, courted and loved. The son of the host had been home on a visit; he was employed in the office of some great institution in Copenhagen; and he was very much pleased with Christine, and she had taken a fancy to him: his parents were ready to give their consent, but Christine was very anxious to retain Ib's good opinion; "and so she had thought of refusing this great piece of good fortune," said the boatman.

At first Ib said not a word; but he became as white as the wall, and slightly shook his head. Then he said slowly:

"Christine must not refuse this advantageous offer."

"Then do you write a few words to her," said the boatman.

And Ib sat down to write; but he could not manage it well: the words would not come as he wished them; and first he altered, and then he tore up the page; but the next morning a letter lay ready to be sent to Christine, and it contained the following words:

"I have read the letter you have sent to your father, and gather from it that you are prospering in all things, and that there is a prospect of higher fortune for you. Ask your heart, Christine, and ponder well the fate that awaits you, if you take me for your husband; what I possess is but little. Do not think of me, or

my position, but think of your own welfare. You are bound to me by no promise, and if in your heart you have given me one, I release you from it. May all treasures of happiness be poured out upon you, Christine. Heaven will console me in its own good time.

"Ever your sincere friend,

"Ib ."

And the letter was dispatched, and Christine duly received it.

In the course of that November her banns were published in the church on the heath, and in Copenhagen, where her bridegroom lived; and to Copenhagen she proceeded, under the protection of her future mother-in-law, because the bridegroom could not undertake the journey into Jutland on account of his various occupations. On the journey, Christine met her father in a certain village; and here the two took leave of one another. A few words were mentioned concerning this fact, but Ib made no remark upon it: his mother said he had grown very silent of late; indeed, he had become very pensive, and thus the three nuts came into his mind which the gipsy-woman had given him long ago, and of which he had given two to Christine. Yes, it seemed right—they were wishing-nuts, and in one of them lay a golden carriage with two horses, and in the other very elegant clothes; all those luxuries would now be Christine's in the capital. Her part had thus come true. And to him, Ib, the nut had offered only black earth. The gipsy-woman had said, this was "the best of all for him." Yes, it was right, that also was coming true. The black earth was the best for him. Now he understood clearly what had been the woman's meaning. In the black earth, in the dark grave, would be the best happiness for him.

And once again years passed by, not very many, but they seemed long years to Ib. The old innkeeper and his wife died, one after the other; the whole of their property, many thousands of dollars, came to the son. Yes, now Christine could have the golden carriage, and plenty of fine clothes.

During the two long years that followed no letter came from Christine; and when her father at length received one from her, it was not written in prosperity, by any means. Poor Christine! neither she nor her husband had understood how to keep the money together; and there seemed to be no blessing with it, because they had not sought it.

And again the weather bloomed and faded. The winter had swept for many years across the heath, and over the ridge beneath which Ib dwelt, sheltered from the rough winds. The spring sun shone bright, and Ib guided the plough across his field, when one day it glided over what

appeared to be a fire stone. Something like a great black ship came out of the ground, and when Ib took it up it proved to be a piece of metal; and the place from which the plough had cut the stone gleamed brightly with ore. It was a great golden armlet of ancient workmanship that he had found. He had disturbed a "Hun's Grave," and discovered the costly treasure buried in it. Ib showed what he had found to the clergyman, who explained its value to him, and then he betook himself to the local judges, who reported the discovery to the keeper of the museum, and recommended Ib to deliver up the treasure in person.

"You have found in the earth the best thing you could find," said the judge.

"The best thing!" thought Ib. "The very best thing for me, and found in the earth! Well, if that is the best, the gipsy-woman was correct in what she prophesied to me."

So Ib travelled with the ferry-boat from Aarhus to Copenhagen. To him, who had but once or twice passed beyond the river that rolled by his home, this seemed like a voyage across the ocean. And he arrived in Copenhagen.

The value of the gold he had found was paid over to him; it was a large sum—six hundred dollars. And Ib of the heath wandered about in the great capital.

On the day on which he had settled to go back with the captain, Ib lost his way in the streets, and took quite a different direction from the one he intended to follow. He had wandered into the suburb of Christianhaven, into a poor little street. Not a human being was to be seen. At last a very little girl came out of one of the wretched houses. Ib inquired of the little one the way to the street which he wanted; but she looked shyly at him, and began to cry bitterly. He asked her what ailed her, but could not understand what she said in reply. But as they went along the street together, they passed beneath the light of a lamp; and when the light fell on the girl's face, he felt a strange and sharp emotion, for Christine stood bodily before him, just as he remembered her from the days of his childhood.

And he went with the little maiden into the wretched house, and ascended the narrow, crazy staircase, which led to a little attic chamber in the roof. The air in this chamber was heavy and almost suffocating: no light was burning; but there was heavy sighing and moaning in one corner. Ib struck a light with the help of a match. It was the mother of the child who lay sighing on the miserable bed.

"Can I be of any service to you?" asked Ib. "This little girl has brought me up here, but I am a stranger in this city. Are there no

neighbours or friends whom I could call to you?" And he raised the sick woman's head, and smoothed her pillow.

It was Christine of the heath!

For years her name had not been mentioned yonder, for the mention of her would have disturbed Ib's peace of mind, and rumour had told nothing good concerning her. The wealth which her husband had inherited from his parents had made him proud and arrogant. He had given up his certain appointment, had travelled for half a year in foreign lands, and on his return had incurred debts, and yet lived in an expensive fashion. His carriage had bent over more and more, so to speak, until at last it turned over completely. The many merry companions and table-friends he had entertained declared it served him right, for he had kept house like a madman; and one morning his corpse was found in the canal.

The icy hand of death was already on Christine. Her youngest child, only a few weeks old, expected in prosperity and born in misery, was already in its grave, and it had come to this with Christine herself, that she lay, sick to death and forsaken, in a miserable room, amid a poverty that she might well have borne in her childish days, but which now oppressed her painfully, since she had been accustomed to better things. It was her eldest child, also a little Christine, that here suffered hunger and poverty with her, and whom Ib had now brought home.

"I am unhappy at the thought of dying and leaving the poor child here alone," she said. "Ah, what is to become of the poor thing?" And not a word more could she utter.

And Ib brought out another match, and lighted up a piece of candle he found in the room, and the flame illumined the wretched dwelling. And Ib looked at the little girl, and thought how Christine had looked when she was young; and he felt that for her sake he would be fond of this child, which was as yet a stranger to him. The dying woman gazed at him, and her eyes opened wider and wider—did she recognize him? He never knew, for no further word passed over her lips.

And it was in the forest by the river Gudenau, in the region of the heath. The air was thick and dark, and there were no blossoms on the heath plant; but the autumn tempests whirled the yellow leaves from the wood into the stream, and out over the heath towards the hut of the boatman, in which strangers now dwelt; but beneath the ridge, safe beneath the protection of the high trees, stood the little farm, trimly whitewashed and painted, and within it the turf blazed up cheerily in the chimney; for within was sunlight, the beaming sunlight of a child's

two eyes; and the tones of the spring birds sounded in the words that came from the child's rosy lips: she sat on Ib's knee, and Ib was to her both father and mother, for her own parents were dead, and had vanished from her as a dream vanishes alike from children and grown men. Ib sat in the pretty neat house, for he was a prosperous man, while the

LITTLE CHRISTINE.

mother of the little girl rested in the churchyard at Copenhagen, where she had died in poverty.

Ib had money, and was said to have provided for the future. He had won gold out of the black earth, and he had a Christine for his own, after all.

OLE THE TOWER-KEEPER.

"In the world it's always going up and down—and now I can't go up any higher!" So said Ole the tower-keeper. "Most people have to try both the ups and the downs; and, rightly considered, we all get to be watchmen at last, and look down upon life from a height."

Such was the speech of Ole, my friend, the old tower-keeper, a strange talkative old fellow, who seemed to speak out everything that came into his head, and who for all that had many a serious thought deep in his heart. Yes, he was the child of respectable people, and there were even some who said that he was the son of a privy councillor, or that he might have been; he had studied too, and had been assistant teacher and deputy clerk; but of what service was all that to him? In those days he lived in the clerk's house, and was to have everything in the house, to be at free quarters, as the saying is; but he was still, so to speak, a fine young gentleman. He wanted to have his boots cleaned with patent blacking, and the clerk could only afford ordinary grease; and upon that point they split—one spoke of stinginess, the other of vanity, and the blacking became the black cause of enmity between them, and at last they parted.

This is what he demanded of the world in general—namely, patent blacking—and he got nothing but grease. Accordingly he at last drew back from all men, and became a hermit; but the church tower is the only place in a great city where hermitage, office, and bread can be found together. So he betook himself up thither, and smoked his pipe as he made his solitary rounds. He looked upward and downward, and had his own thoughts, and told in his way of what he read in books and in himself. I often lent him books, good books; and you may know a man by the company he keeps. He loved neither the English governess-novels, nor the French ones, which he called a mixture of empty wind and raisin-stalks: he wanted biographies and descriptions of the wonders of the world. I visited him at least once a year, generally directly after New Year's-day, and then he always spoke of this and that which the change of the year had put into his head.

I will tell the story of three of these visits, and will reproduce his own words whenever I can remember them.

First Visit.

Among the books which I had lately lent Ole, was one which had greatly rejoiced and occupied him. It was a geological book, containing an account of the boulders.

"Yes, they 're rare old fellows, those boulders!" he said; "and to think that we should pass them without noticing them! And over the street pavement, the paving-stones, those fragments of the oldest remains of antiquity, one walks without ever thinking about them. I have done the very thing myself. But now I look respectfully at every paving-stone. Many thanks for the book! It has filled me with thought, and has made me long to read more on the subject. The romance of the earth is, after all, the most wonderful of all romances. It 's a pity one can't read the first volumes of it, because they 're written in a language that we don't understand. One must read in the different strata, in the pebble-stones, for each separate period. Yes, it is a romance, a very wonderful romance, and we all have our place in it. We grope and ferret about, and yet remain where we are, but the ball keeps turning, without emptying the ocean over us; the clod on which we move about, holds, and does not let us through. And then it 's a story that has been acting for thousands upon thousands of years, and is still going on. My best thanks for the book about the boulders. Those are fellows indeed! they could tell us something worth hearing, if they only knew how to talk. It 's really a pleasure, now and then to become a mere nothing, especially when a man is as highly placed as I am. And then to think that we all, even with patent lacquer, are nothing more than insects of a moment on that anthill the earth, though we may be insects with stars and garters, places and offices! One feels quite a novice beside these venerable million-year-old boulders. On New Year's-eve I was reading the book, and had lost myself in it so completely, that I forgot my usual New Year's diversion, namely, the wild hunt to Amack. Ah, you don't know what that is!

"The journey of the witches on broomsticks is well enough known—that journey is taken on St. John's-eve, to the Brocken; but we have a wild journey also, which is national and modern, and that is the journey to Amack on the night of the New Year. All indifferent poets and poetesses, musicians, newspaper writers and artistic notabilities, I mean those who are no good, ride in the New Year's-night through the air to Amack. They sit backwards on their painting brushes or quill pens, for steel pens won't bear them, they 're too stiff. As I told you, I see

that every New Year's night, and could mention the majority of the riders by name, but I should not like to draw their enmity upon myself, for they don't like people to talk about their ride to Amack on quill pens. I've a kind of niece, who is a fishwife, and who, as she tells me, supplies three respectable newspapers with the terms of abuse and vituperation they use, and she has herself been at Amack as an invited guest; but she was carried out thither, for she does not own a quill pen,

THE RIDE TO AMACK.

nor can she ride. She has told me all about it. Half of what she said is not true, but the other half gives us information enough. When she was out there, the festivities began with a song: each of the guests had written his own song, and each one sung his own song, for he thought that the best, and it was all one, all the same melody. Then those came marching up, in little bands, who are only busy with their mouths. There were ringing bells that sang alternately; and then came the little drummers that beat their tattoo in the family circle; and acquaintance was made with those who write without putting their names, which here means as much as using grease instead of patent blacking; and then there was the beadle with his boy, and the boy was the worst off, for in

general he gets no notice taken of him; then too there was the good street-sweeper with his cart, who turns over the dust-bin, and calls it "good, very good, remarkably good." And in the midst of the pleasure that was afforded by the mere meeting of these folks, there shot up out of the great dirt-heap at Amack a stem, a tree, an immense flower, a great mushroom, a perfect roof, which formed a sort of warehouse for the worthy company, for in it hung everything they had given to the world during the Old Year. Out of the tree poured sparks like flames of fire; these were the ideas and thoughts, borrowed from others, which they had used, and which now got free and rushed away like so many fire-works. They played at 'the stick burns,' and the young poets played at 'heart-burns,' and the witlings played off their jests, and the jests rolled away with a thundering sound, as if empty pots were being shattered against doors. 'It was very amusing!' my niece said; in fact, she said many things that were very malicious but very amusing, but I won't mention them, for a man must be good-natured and not a carping critic. But you will easily perceive that when a man once knows the rights of the journey to Amack, as I know them, it's quite natural that on the New Year's-night one should look out to see the wild chase go by. If in the New Year I miss certain persons who used to be there, I am sure to notice others who are new arrivals; but this year I omitted taking my look at the guests. I bowled away on the boulders, rolled back through millions of years, and saw the stones break loose high up in the North, saw them drifting about on icebergs, long before Noah's ark was constructed, saw them sink down to the bottom of the sea, and reappear with a sand-bank, with that one that peered forth from the flood and said, 'This shall be Zealand!' I saw them become the dwelling-place of birds that are unknown to us, and then become the seat of wild chiefs of whom we know nothing, until with their axes they cut their Runic signs into a few of these stones, which then came into the calendar of time. But as for me, I had gone quite beyond all lapse of time, and had become a cipher and a nothing. Then three or four beautiful falling stars came down, which cleared the air, and gave my thoughts another direction. You know what a falling star is, do you not? The learned men are not at all clear about it. I have my own ideas about shooting stars, as the common people in many parts call them, and my idea is this: How often are silent thanksgivings offered up for one who has done a good and noble action! the thanks are often speechless, but they are not lost for all that. I think these thanks are caught up, and the sunbeams bring the silent, hidden thankfulness over the head of the benefactor; and if it be a whole people that

has been expressing its gratitude through a long lapse of time, the thankfulness appears as a nosegay of flowers, and at length falls in the form of a shooting star upon the good man's grave. I am always very much pleased when I see a shooting star, especially in the New Year's-night, and then find out for whom the gift of gratitude was intended. Lately a gleaming star fell in the south-west, as a tribute of thanks-giving to many, many! 'For whom was that star intended?' thought I. It fell, no doubt, on the hill by the Bay of Flensberg, where the Danebrog waves over the graves of Schleppegrell, Läslöes, and their comrades. One star also fell in the midst of the land, fell upon Sorö, a flower on the grave of Holberg, the thanks of the year from a great many—thanks for his charming plays!

"It is a great and pleasant thought to know that a shooting star falls upon our graves; on mine certainly none will fall—no sunbeam brings thanks to me, for here there is nothing worthy of thanks. I shall not get the patent lacquer," said Ole; "for my fate on earth is only grease, after all."

Second Visit.

It was New Year's-day, and I went up on the tower. Ole spoke of the toasts that were drunk on the transition from the old year into the new, from one grave into the other, as he said. And he told me a story about the glasses, and this story had a very deep meaning. It was this:

"When on the New Year's-night the clock strikes twelve, the people at the table rise up, with full glasses in their hands, and drain these glasses, and drink success to the New Year. They begin the year with the glass in their hands; that is a good beginning for topers. They begin the New Year by going to bed, and that's a good beginning for drones. Sleep is sure to play a great part in the New Year, and the glass like-wise. Do you know what dwells in the glass?" asked Ole. "I will tell you—there dwell in the glass, first, health, and then pleasure, then the most complete sensual delight: and misfortune and the bitterest woe dwell in the glass also. Now suppose we count the glasses—of course I count the different degrees in the glasses for different people.

"You see, the *first glass*, that's the glass of health, and in that the herb of health is found growing; put it up on the beam in the ceiling, and at the end of the year you may be sitting in the arbour of health.

"If you take the *second glass*—from this a little bird soars upwards, twittering in guileless cheerfulness, so that a man may listen to his song

and perhaps join in 'Fair is life! no downcast looks! Take courage and march onward!'

"Out of the *third glass* rises a little winged urchin, who cannot certainly be called an angel-child, for there is goblin blood in his veins, and he has the spirit of a goblin; not wishing to hurt or harm you, indeed, but very ready to play off tricks upon you. He'll sit at your ear and whisper merry thoughts to you; he'll creep into your heart and warm you, so that you grow very merry and become a wit, so far as the wits of the others can judge.

"In the *fourth glass* is neither herb, bird, nor urchin: in that glass is the pause drawn by reason, and one may never go beyond that sign.

"Take the *fifth glass*, and you will weep at yourself, you will feel such a deep emotion; or it will affect you in a different way. Out of the glass there will spring with a bang Prince Carnival, nine times and extravagantly merry: he'll draw you away with him, you'll forget your dignity, if you have any, and you'll forget more than you should or ought to forget. All is dance, song, and sound; the masks will carry you away with them, and the daughters of vanity, clad in silk and satin, will come with loose hair and alluring charms: but tear yourself away if you can!

"The *sixth glass*! Yes, in that glass sits a demon, in the form of a little, well-dressed, attractive and very fascinating man, who thoroughly understands you, agrees with you in everything, and becomes quite a second self to you. He has a lantern with him, to give you light as he accompanies you home. There is an old legend about a saint who was allowed to choose one of the seven deadly sins, and who accordingly chose drunkenness, which appeared to him the least, but which led him to commit all the other six. The man's blood is mingled with that of the demon—it is the sixth glass, and with that the germ of all evil shoots up within us; and each one grows up with a strength like that of the grains of mustard seed, and shoots up into a tree, and spreads over the whole world; and most people have no choice but to go into the oven, to be re-cast in a new form.

"That's the history of the glasses," said the tower-keeper Ole, "and it can be told with lacquer or only with grease; but I give it you with both!"

Third Visit.

On this occasion I chose the general "moving-day" for my visit to Ole, for on that day it is anything but agreeable down in the streets in

the town; for they are full of sweepings, shreds, and remnants of all sorts, to say nothing of the cast-off bed straw in which one has to wade about. But this time I happened to see two children playing in this wilderness of sweepings. They were playing at "going to bed," for the occasion seemed especially favourable for this sport: they crept under the straw, and drew an old bit of ragged curtain over themselves by way of coverlet. "It was splendid!" they said; but it was a little too strong for me, and besides, I was obliged to mount up on my visit.

"It's moving-day to-day," he said; "streets and houses are like a dust-bin, a large dust-bin; but I'm content with a cartload. I may get something good out of that, and I really did get something good out of it, once. Shortly after Christmas I was going up the street; it was rough weather, wet and dirty; the right kind of weather to catch cold in. The dustman was there with his cart, which was full, and looked like a sample of streets on moving-day. At the back of the cart stood a fir tree, quite green still, and with tinsel on its twigs: it had been used on Christmas-eve, and now it was thrown out into the street, and the dustman had stood it up at the back of his cart. It was droll to look at, or you may say it was mournful—all depends on what you think of when you see it; and I thought about it, and thought this and that of many things that were in the cart: or I might have done so, and that comes to the same thing. There was an old lady's glove too: I wonder what that was thinking of? Shall I tell you? The glove was lying there, pointing with its little finger at the tree. 'I'm sorry for the tree,' it thought; 'and I was also at the feast, where the chandeliers glittered. My life was, so to speak, a ball-night: a pressure of the hand, and I burst! My memory keeps dwelling upon that, and I have really nothing else to live for!' This is what the glove thought, or what it might have thought. 'That's a stupid affair with yonder fir tree,' said the potsherds. You see, potsherds think everything is stupid. 'When one is in the dust-cart,' they said, 'one ought not to give one's self airs and wear tinsel. I know that I have been useful in the world, far more useful than such a green stick.' That was a view that might be taken, and I don't think it quite a peculiar one; but for all that the fir tree looked very well: it was like a little poetry in the dust-heap; and truly there is dust enough in the streets no moving-day. The way is difficult and troublesome then, and I feel obliged to run away out of the confusion; or if I am on the tower, I stay there and look down, and it is amusing enough.

"There are the good people below, playing at 'changing houses.' They toil and tug away with their goods and chattels, and the house-

THE REJECTED TRAVELLER.

hold goblin sits in an old tub and moves with them; all the little griefs of the lodging and the family, and the real cares and sorrows, move with them out of the old dwelling into the new; and what gain is there for them or for us in the whole affair? Yes, there was written long ago the good old maxim: 'Think on the great moving-day of death!' That

is a serious thought; I hope it is not disagreeable to you that I should have touched upon it? Death is the most certain messenger after all, in spite of his various occupations. Yes, Death is the omnibus conductor, and he is the passport writer, and he countersigns our service-book, and he is director of the savings bank of life. Do you understand me? All the deeds of our life, the great and the little alike, we put into this savings bank; and when Death calls with his omnibus, and we have to step in, and drive with him into the land of eternity, then on the frontier he gives us our service-book as a pass. As a provision for the journey he takes this or that good deed we have done, and lets it accompany us; and this may be very pleasant or very terrific. Nobody has ever escaped this omnibus journey: there is certainly a talk about *one* who was not allowed to go—they call him the Wandering Jew: he has to ride behind the omnibus. If he had been allowed to get in, he would have escaped the clutches of the poets.

"Just cast your mind's eye into that great omnibus. The society is mixed, for king and beggar, genius and idiot, sit side by side: they must go without their property and money; they have only the service-book and the gift out of the saving's bank with them. But which of our deeds is selected and given to us? Perhaps quite a little one, one that we have forgotten, but which has been recorded—small as a pea, but the pea can send out a blooming shoot. The poor bumpkin, who sat on a low stool in the corner, and was jeered at and flouted, will perhaps have his worn-out stool given him as a provision; and the stool may become a litter in the land of eternity, and rise up then as a throne, gleaming like gold, and blooming as an arbour. He who always lounged about, and drank the spiced draught of pleasure, that he might forget the wild things he had done here, will have his barrel given to him on the journey, and will have to drink from it as they go on; and the drink is bright and clear, so that the thoughts remain pure, and all good and noble feelings are awakened, and he sees and feels what in life he could not or would not see; and then he has within him the punishment, the *gnawing worm*, which will not die through time incalculable. If on the glasses there stood written '*oblivion*,' on the barrel '*remembrance*' is inscribed.

"When I read a good book, an historical work, I always think at last of the poetry of what I am reading, and of the omnibus of death, and wonder which of the hero's deeds Death took out of the savings bank for him, and what provisions he got on the journey into eternity. There was once a French king—I have forgotten his name, for the names of good people are sometimes forgotten, even by me, but it will come back

some day; there was a king who, during a famine, became the benefactor of his people; and the people raised to his memory a monument of snow, with the inscription, 'Quicker than this melts didst thou bring help!' I fancy that Death, looking back upon the monument, gave him a single snow-flake as provision, a snow-flake that never melts, and this flake floated over his royal head, like a white butterfly, into the land of eternity. Thus too, there was a Louis XI.—I have remembered *his* name, for one remembers what is bad—a trait of him often comes into my thoughts, and I wish one could say the story is not true. He had his lord high constable executed, and he could execute him, right or wrong; but he had the innocent children of the constable, one seven and the other eight years old, placed under the scaffold so that the warm blood of their father spurted over them, and then he had them sent to the Bastille, and shut up in iron cages, where not even a coverlet was given them to protect them from the cold. And King Louis sent the executioner to them every week, and had a tooth pulled out of the head of each, that they might not be too comfortable; and the elder of the boys said, 'My mother would die of grief if she knew that my younger brother had to suffer so cruelly; therefore pull out two of my teeth, and spare him.' The tears came into the hangman's eyes, but the king's will was stronger than the tears; and every week two little teeth were brought to him on a silver plate; he had demanded them, and he had them. I fancy that Death took these two teeth out of the savings bank of life, and gave them to Louis XI., to carry with him on the great journey into the land of immortality: they fly before him like two flames of fire; they shine and burn, and they bite him, the innocent children's teeth.

"Yes, that's a serious journey, the omnibus ride on the great moving-day! And when is it to be undertaken? That's just the serious part of it. Any day, any how, any minute, the omnibus may draw up. Which of our deeds will Death take out of the savings bank, and give to us as provision? Let us think of the moving-day that is not marked in the calendar."

THE BOTTLE-NECK.

In a narrow crooked street, among other abodes of poverty, stood an especially narrow and tall house built of timber, which time had

knocked about in such fashion that it seemed to be out of joint in every direction. The house was inhabited by poor people, and the deepest poverty was apparent in the garret lodging in the gable, where, in front of the only window, hung an old bent birdcage, which had not even a proper water-glass, but only a bottle-neck reversed, with a cork stuck in the mouth, to do duty for one. An old maid stood by the window: she had hung the cage with green chickweed; and a little chaffinch hopped from perch to perch, and sang and twittered merrily enough.

"Yes, it's all very well for you to sing," said the Bottle-neck; that is to say, it did not pronounce the words as we can speak them, for a bottle-neck can't speak; but that's what he thought to himself in his own mind, like when we people talk quietly to ourselves. "Yes, it's all very well for you to sing, you that have all your limbs uninjured. You ought to feel what it's like to lose one's body, and to have only mouth and neck left, and to be hampered with work into the bargain, as in my case; and then I'm sure you would not sing. But after all it is well that there should be somebody at least who is merry. I've no reason to sing, and, moreover, I can't sing. Yes, when I was a whole bottle, I sung out well if they rubbed me with a cork. They used to call me a perfect lark, a magnificent lark! Ah, when I was out at a picnic with the tanner's family, and his daughter was betrothed! Yes, I remember it as if it had happened only yesterday. I have gone through a great deal, when I come to recollect. I've been in the fire and the water, have been deep in the black earth, and have mounted higher than most of the others; and now I'm hanging here, outside the birdcage, in the air and the sunshine! Oh, it would be quite worth while to hear my history; but I don't speak aloud of it, because I can't."

And now the Bottle-neck told its story, which was sufficiently remarkable. It told the story to itself, or only thought it in its own mind; and the little bird sang his song merrily, and down in the street there was driving and hurrying, and every one thought of his own affairs, or perhaps of nothing at all; and only the Bottle-neck thought. It thought of the flaming furnace in the manufactory, where it had been blown into life; it still remembered that it had been quite warm, that it had glanced into the hissing furnace, the home of its origin, and had felt a great desire to leap directly back again; but that gradually it had become cooler, and had been very comfortable in the place to which it was taken. It had stood in a rank with a whole regiment of brothers and sisters, all out of the same furnace; some of them had certainly been blown into champagne bottles, and others into beer bottles, and that makes a difference. Later, out in the world, it may well happen that a beer bottle

may contain the most precious wine, and a champagne bottle be filled with blacking; but even in decay there is always something left by which people can see what one has been—nobility is nobility, even when filled with blacking.

All the bottles were packed up, and our bottle was among them. At that time it did not think to finish its career as a bottle-neck, or that it should work its way up to be a bird's glass, which is always an honourable thing; for one is of some consequence, after all. The bottle did not again behold the light of day till it was unpacked with the other bottles in the cellar of the wine merchant, and rinsed out for the first time; and that was a strange sensation. There it lay, empty and without a cork, and felt strangely unwell, as if it wanted something, it could not tell what. At last it was filled with good costly wine, and was provided with a cork, and sealed down. A ticket was placed on it, marked "first quality;" and it felt as if it had carried off the first prize at an examination; for, you see, the wine was good and the bottle was good. When one is young, that's the time for poetry! There was a singing and sounding within it, of things which it could not understand—of green sunny mountains, whereon the grape grows, where many vine dressers, men and women, sing and dance and rejoice. "Ah, how beautiful is life!" There was a singing and sounding to all this in the bottle, as in a young poet's brain; and many a young poet does not understand the meaning of the song that is within him.

One morning the bottle was bought, for the tanner's apprentice was dispatched for a bottle of wine—"of the best." And now it was put in the provision basket, with ham and cheese and sausages; the finest butter and the best bread were put into the basket too, the tanner's daughter herself packed it. She was young and pretty; her brown eyes laughed, and round her mouth played a smile as elegant as that in her eyes. She had delicate hands, beautifully white, and her neck was whiter still; you saw at once that she was one of the most beautiful girls in the town: and still she was not engaged.

The provision basket was in the lap of the young girl when the family drove out into the forest. The bottle-neck looked out from the folds of the white napkin. There was red wax upon the cork, and the bottle looked straight into the girl's face. It also looked at the young sailor who sat next to the girl. He was a friend of old days, the son of the portrait painter. Quite lately he had passed with honour through his examination as mate, and to-morrow he was to sail away in a ship, far off to a distant land. There had been much talk of this while the basket was being packed; and certainly the eyes and mouth of the

tanner's pretty daughter did not wear a very joyous expression just then.

The young people sauntered through the green wood, and talked to one another. What were they talking of? No, the bottle could not hear that, for it was in the provision basket. A long time passed before it was drawn forth; but when that happened, there had been pleasant things going on, for all were laughing, and the tanner's daughter laughed too; but she spoke less than before, and her cheeks glowed like two roses.

The father took the full bottle and the corkscrew in his hand. Yes, it 's a strange thing to be drawn thus, the first time! The bottle-neck could never afterwards forget that impressive moment; and indeed there was quite a convulsion within him when the cork flew out, and a great throbbing as the wine poured forth into the glasses.

"Health to the betrothed pair!" cried the papa; and every glass was emptied to the dregs, and the young mate kissed his beautiful bride.

"Happiness and blessing!" said the two old people, the father and mother; and the young man filled the glasses again.

"Safe return, and a wedding this day next year!" he cried; and when the glasses were emptied, he took the bottle, raised it on high, and said, "Thou hast been present at the happiest day of my life, thou shalt never serve another!"

And so saying he hurled it high into the air. The tanner's daughter did not then think that she should see the bottle fly again; and yet it was to be so. It then fell into the thick reeds on the margin of a little woodland lake; and the bottle-neck could remember quite plainly how it lay there for some time. "I gave them wine, and they gave me marsh-water," he said; "but it was all meant for the best." He could no longer see the betrothed couple and the cheerful old people; but for a long time he could hear them rejoicing and singing. Then at last came two peasant boys, and looked into the reeds; they spied out the bottle, and took it up; and now it was provided for.

At their home, in the wood cottage, the eldest of these brothers, who was a sailor, and about to start on a long voyage, had been the day before to take leave: the mother was just engaged packing up various things he was to take with him on his journey, and which the father was going to carry into the town that evening to see his son once more, and to give him a farewell greeting for the lad's mother and himself. A little bottle of medicated brandy had already been wrapped up in a parcel, when the boys came in with a larger and stronger bottle which they had found. This bottle would hold more than the little one,

and they pronounced that the brandy would be capital for a bad digestion, inasmuch as it was mixed with medical herbs. The draught that was now poured into the bottle was not so good as the red wine with which it had once been filled; these were bitter drops, but even these are sometimes good. The new big bottle was to go, and not the little one; and so the bottle went travelling again. It was taken on board

THE BOTTLE IS PRESENT ON A JOYOUS OCCASION.

for Peter Jensen, in the very same ship in which the young mate sailed. But he did not see the bottle; and, indeed, he would not have known it, or thought it was the same one out of which they had drunk a health to the betrothed pair, and to his own happy return.

Certainly it had no longer wine to give, but still it contained something that was just as good. Accordingly, whenever Peter Jensen brought it out, it was dubbed by his messmates The Apothecary. It contained the best medicine, medicine that strengthened the weak, and

it gave liberally so long as it had a drop left. That was a pleasant time, and the bottle sang when it was rubbed with the cork; and it was called the Great Lark, "Peter Jensen's Lark."

Long days and months rolled on, and the bottle already stood empty in a corner, when it happened—whether on the passage out or home the bottle could not tell, for it had never been ashore—that a storm arose; great waves came careering along, darkly and heavily, and lifted and tossed the ship to and fro. The mainmast was shivered, and a wave started one of the planks, and the pumps became useless. It was black night. The ship sank; but at the last moment the young mate wrote on a leaf of paper, "God's will be done! We are sinking!" He wrote the name of his betrothed, and his own name, and that of the ship, and put the leaf in an empty bottle that happened to be at hand: he corked it firmly down, and threw it out into the foaming sea. He knew not that it was the very bottle from which the goblet of joy and hope had once been filled for him; and now it was tossing on the waves with his last greeting and the message of death.

The ship sank, and the crew sank with her. The bottle sped on like a bird, for it bore a heart, a loving letter, within itself. And the sun rose and set; and the bottle felt as at the time when it first came into being in the red gleaming oven—it felt a strong desire to leap back into the light.

It experienced calms and fresh storms; but it was hurled against no rock, and was devoured by no shark; and thus it drifted on for a year and a day, sometimes towards the north, sometimes towards the south, just as the current carried it. Beyond this it was its own master, but one may grow tired even of that.

The written page, the last farewell of the bridegroom to his betrothed, would only bring sorrow if it came into her hands; but where were the hands, so white and delicate, which had once spread the cloth on the fresh grass in the greenwood, on the betrothal day? Where was the tanner's daughter? Yes, where was the land, and which land might be nearest to her dwelling? The bottle knew not; it drove onward and onward, and was at last tired of wandering, because that was not in its way; but yet it had to travel until at last it came to land—to a strange land. It understood not a word of what was spoken here, for this was not the language it had heard spoken before; and one loses a good deal if one does not understand the language.

The bottle was fished out and examined on all sides. The leaf of paper within it was discovered, and taken out, and turned over and over, but the people did not understand what was written thereon. They saw

that the bottle must have been thrown overboard, and that something about this was written on the paper, but what were the words? That question remained unanswered, and the paper was put back into the bottle, and the latter was deposited in a great cupboard, in a great room, in a great house.

Whenever strangers came the paper was brought out, and turned over and over, so that the inscription, which was only written in pencil, became more and more illegible, so that at last no one could see that there were letters on it. And for a whole year more the bottle remained standing in the cupboard; and then it was put into the loft, where it became covered with dust and cobwebs. Ah, how often it thought of the better days, the times when it had poured forth red wine in the greenwood, when it had been rocked on the waves of the sea, and when it had carried a secret, a letter, a parting sigh, safely enclosed in its bosom.

For full twenty years it stood up in the loft; and it might have remained there longer, but that the house was to be rebuilt. The roof was taken off, and then the bottle was noticed, and they spoke about it, but it did not understand their language; for one cannot learn a language by being shut up in a loft, even if one stays there for twenty years.

"If I had been down in the room," thought the Bottle, "I might have learned it."

It was now washed and rinsed, and indeed this was requisite. It felt quite transparent and fresh, and as if its youth had been renewed in this its old age; but the paper it had carried so faithfully had been destroyed in the washing.

The bottle was filled with seeds, though it scarcely knew what they were. It was corked, and well wrapped up. No light nor lantern was it vouchsafed to behold, much less the sun or the moon; and yet, it thought, when one goes on a journey one ought to see something; but though it saw nothing, it did what was most important—it travelled to the place of its destination, and was there unpacked.

"What trouble they have taken over yonder with that bottle!" it heard people say; "and yet it is most likely broken." But it was not broken.

The bottle understood every word that was now said; this was the language it had heard at the furnace, and at the wine merchant's, and in the forest, and in the ship, the only good old language it understood: it had come back home, and the language was as a salutation of welcome to it. For very joy it felt ready to jump out of people's hands; hardly

did it notice that its cork had been drawn, and that it had been emptied and carried into the cellar, to be placed there and forgotten. There 's no place like home, even if it 's in a cellar! It never occurred to the bottle to think how long it would lie there, for it felt comfortable, and accordingly lay there for years. At last people came down into the cellar to carry off all the bottles, and ours among the rest.

Out in the garden there was a great festival. Flaming lamps hung like garlands, and paper lanterns shone transparent, like great tulips. The evening was lovely, the weather still and clear, the stars twinkled; it was the time of the new moon, but in reality the whole moon could be seen as a bluish grey disc with a golden rim round half its surface, which was a very beautiful sight for those who had good eyes.

The illumination extended even to the most retired of the garden walks; at least so much of it, that one could find one 's way there. Among the leaves of the hedges stood bottles, with a light in each; and among them was also the bottle we know, and which was destined one day to finish its career as a bottle-neck, a bird's drinking-glass. Everything here appeared lovely to our bottle, for it was once more in the greenwood, amid joy and feasting, and heard song and music, and the noise and murmur of a crowd, especially in that part of the garden where the lamps blazed and the paper lanterns displayed their many colours. Thus it stood, in a distant walk certainly, but that made it the more important; for it bore its light, and was at once ornamental and useful, and that is as it should be: in such an hour one forgets twenty years spent in a loft, and it is right one should do so.

There passed close to it a pair, like the pair who had walked together long ago in the wood, the sailor and the tanner's daughter; the bottle seemed to experience all that over again. In the garden were walking not only the guests, but other people who were allowed to view all the splendour; and among these latter came an old maid who seemed to stand alone in the world. She was just thinking, like the bottle, of the greenwood, and of a young betrothed pair—of a pair which concerned her very nearly, a pair in which she had an interest, and of which she had been a part, in that happiest hour of her life—the hour one never forgets, if one should become ever so old a maid. But she did not know our bottle, nor did the bottle recognize the old maid: it is thus we pass each other in the world, meeting again and again, as these two met, now that they were together again in the same town.

From the garden the bottle was dispatched once more to the wine merchant's, where it was filled with wine, and sold to the aëronaut, who was to make an ascent in his balloon on the following Sunday. A great

crowd had assembled to witness the sight; military music had been provided, and many other preparations had been made. The bottle saw everything, from a basket in which it lay next to a live rabbit, which latter was quite bewildered because he knew he was to be taken up into the air, and let down again in a parachute; but the bottle knew nothing of the "up" or the "down;" it only saw the balloon swelling up bigger and bigger, and at last, when it could swell no more, beginning to rise, and to grow more and more restless. The ropes that held it were cut, and the huge machine floated aloft with the aëronaut and the basket containing the bottle and the rabbit, and the music sounded, and all the people cried, "Hurrah!"

"This is a wonderful passage, up into the air!" thought the Bottle; "this is a new way of sailing; at any rate, up here we cannot strike upon anything."

Thousands of people gazed up at the balloon, and the old maid looked up at it also; she stood at the open window of the garret, in which hung the cage with the little chaffinch, who had no water-glass as yet, but was obliged to be content with an old cup. In the window stood a myrtle in a pot; and it had been put a little aside that it might not fall out, for the old maid was leaning out of the window to look, and she distinctly saw the aëronaut in the balloon, and how he let down the rabbit in the parachute, and then drank to the health of all the spectators, and at length hurled the bottle high in the air; she never thought that this was the identical bottle which she had already once seen thrown aloft in honour of her and of her friend on the day of rejoicing in the greenwood, in the time of her youth.

The bottle had no respite for thought; for it was quite startled at thus suddenly reaching the highest point in its career. Steeples and roofs lay far, far beneath, and the people looked like mites.

But now it began to descend with a much more rapid fall than that of the rabbit; the bottle threw somersaults in the air, and felt quite young, and quite free and unfettered; and yet it was half full of wine, though it did not remain so long. What a journey! The sun shone on the bottle, all the people were looking at it, the balloon was already far away, and soon the bottle was far away too; for it fell upon a roof and broke; but the pieces had got such an impetus that they could not stop themselves, but went jumping and rolling on till they came down into the courtyard and lay there in smaller pieces yet; the bottle-neck only managed to keep whole, and that was cut off as clean as if it had been done with a diamond.

"That would do capitally for a bird-glass," said the cellarmen; but

they had neither a bird nor a cage; and to expect them to provide both because they had found a bottle-neck that might be made available for a glass, would have been expecting too much; but the old maid in the garret, perhaps it might be useful to her; and now the bottle-neck was taken up to her, and was provided with a cork. The part that had been uppermost was now turned downwards, as often happens when changes take place; fresh water was poured into it, and it was fastened to the cage of the little bird, which sung and twittered right merrily.

"Yes, it's very well for you to sing," said the Bottle-neck; and it was considered remarkable for having been in the balloon—for that was all they knew of its history. Now it hung there as a bird-glass, and heard the murmuring and noise of the people in the street below, and also the words of the old maid in the room within. An old friend had just come to visit her, and they talked—not of the bottle-neck, but about the myrtle in the window.

"No, you certainly must not spend a dollar for your daughter's bridal wreath," said the old maid. "You shall have a beautiful little nosegay from me, full of blossoms. Do you see how splendidly that tree has come on? yes, that has been raised from a spray of the myrtle you gave me on the day after my betrothal, and from which I was to have made my own wreath when the year was past; but that day never came! The eyes closed that were to have been my joy and delight through life. In the depths of the sea he sleeps sweetly, my dear one! The myrtle has become an old tree, and I become a yet older woman; and when it faded at last, I took the last green shoot, and planted it in the ground, and it has become a great tree; and now at length the myrtle will serve at the wedding—as a wreath for your daughter."

There were tears in the eyes of the old maid. She spoke of the beloved of her youth, of their betrothal in the wood; many thoughts came to her, but the thought never came, that quite close to her, before the very window, was a remembrance of those times; the neck of the bottle which had shouted for joy when the cork flew out with a bang on the betrothal day. But the bottle-neck did not recognize her, for he was not listening to what this old maid said—and still that was because he was thinking of her.

GOOD HUMOUR.

My father left me the best inheritance; to wit—good humour. And who was my father? Why, that has nothing to do with the humour. He was lively and stout, round and fat; and his outer and inner man were in direct contradiction to his calling. And pray what was he by profession and calling in civil society? Yes, if this were to be written down and printed in the very beginning of a book, it is probable that many when they read it would lay the book aside, and say, "It looks so uncomfortable; I don't like anything of that sort." And yet my father was neither a horse slaughterer nor an executioner; on the contrary, his office placed him at the head of the most respectable gentry of the town; and he held his place by right, for it was his right place. He had to go first before the bishop even, and before the princes of the blood. He always went first — for he was the driver of the hearse!

There, now it's out! And I will confess that when people saw my father sitting perched up on the omnibus of death, dressed in his long, wide, black cloak, with his black-bordered three-cornered hat on his head—and then his face, exactly as the sun is drawn, round and jocund — it was difficult for them to think of the grave and of sorrow. The face said, "It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter; it will be better than one thinks."

You see, I have inherited my good humour from him, and also the habit of going often to the churchyard, which is a good thing to do if it be done in the right spirit; and then I take in the *Intelligencer*, just as he used to do.

I am not quite young. I have neither wife, nor children, nor a library; but, as aforesaid, I take in the *Intelligencer*, and that's my favourite newspaper, as it was also my father's. It is very useful, and contains everything that a man needs to know — such as who preaches in the church and in the new books. And then what a lot of charity, and what a number of innocent, harmless verses are found in it! Advertisements for husbands and wives, and requests for interviews — all quite simple and natural. Certainly, one may live merrily and be contentedly buried if one takes in the *Intelligencer*. And, as a concluding advantage, by the end of his life a man will have such a capital store of paper, that he may use it as a soft bed, unless he prefers to rest upon wood-shavings.

The newspaper and my walk to the churchyard were always my most exciting occupations — they were like bathing-places for my good humour.

The newspaper every one can read for himself. But please come with me to the churchyard; let us wander there were the sun shines and the trees grow green. Each of the narrow houses is like a closed book, with the back placed uppermost, so that one can only read the title and judge what the book contains, but can tell nothing about it; but I know something of them. I heard it from my father, or found it out myself. I have it all down in my record that I wrote out for my own use and pleasure: all that lie here, and a few more too, are chronicled in it.

Now we are in the churchyard.

Here, behind this white railing, where once a rose tree grew — it is gone now, but a little evergreen from the next grave stretches out its green fingers to make a show — there rests a very unhappy man; and yet, when he lived, he was in what they call a good position. He had enough to live upon, and something over; but worldly cares, or to speak more correctly, his artistic taste, weighed heavily upon him. If in the evening he sat in the theatre to enjoy himself thoroughly, he would be quite put out if the machinist had put too strong a light into one side of the moon, or if the sky-pieces hung down over the scenes when they ought to have hung behind them, or when a palm tree was introduced into a scene representing the Berlin Zoological Gardens, or a cactus in a view of the Tyrol, or a beech tree in the far north of Norway. As if that was of any consequence. Is it not quite immaterial? Who would fidget about such a trifle? It's only make-believe, after all, and every one is expected to be amused. Then sometimes the public applauded too much to suit his taste, and sometimes too little. "They're like wet wood this evening," he would say; "they won't kindle at all!" And then he would look round to see what kind of people they were; and sometimes he would find them laughing at the wrong time, when they ought not to have laughed, and that vexed him; and he fretted, and was an unhappy man, and at last fretted himself into his grave.

Here rests a very happy man. That is to say, a very grand man. He was of high birth, and that was lucky for him, for otherwise he would never have been anything worth speaking of; and nature orders all that very wisely, so that it's quite charming when we think of it. He used to go about in a coat embroidered back and front, and appeared in the saloons of society just like one of those costly, pearl-embroidered bell-pulls, which have always a good, thick, serviceable cord behind them

THE CHURCHYARD NARRATION.

to do the work. He likewise had a good stout cord behind him, in the shape of a substitute, who did his duty, and who still continues to do it behind another embroidered bell-pull. Everything is so nicely managed, it's enough to put one into a good humour.

Here rests — well, it 's a very mournful reflection — here rests a man who spent sixty-seven years considering how he should get a good idea. The object of his life was to say a good thing, and at last he felt convinced in his own mind that he had got one, and was so glad of it that he died of pure joy at having caught an idea at last. Nobody derived any benefit from it, and no one even heard what the good thing was. Now, I can fancy that this same good thing won't let him live quiet in his grave; for let us suppose that it is a good thing which can only be brought out at breakfast if it is to make an effect, and that he, according to the received opinion concerning ghosts, can only rise and walk at midnight. Why, then the good thing would not suit the time, and the man must carry his good idea down with him again. What an unhappy man he must be!

Here rests a remarkably stingy woman. During her lifetime she used to get up at night and mew, so that the neighbours might think she kept a cat — she was so remarkably stingy.

Here is a maiden of another kind. When the canary bird of the heart begins to chirp, reason puts her fingers in her ears. The maiden was going to be married, but—well, it 's an every-day story, and we will let the dead rest.

Here sleeps a widow who carried melody in her mouth and gall in her heart. She used to go out for prey in the families round about; and the prey she hunted was her neighbours' faults, and she was an indefatigable hunter.

Here 's a family sepulchre. Every member of this family held so firmly to the opinions of the rest, that if all the world, and the newspapers into the bargain, said of a certain thing it is so and so, and the little boy came home from school and said, "I 've learned it thus and thus," they declared his opinion to be the only true one, because he belonged to the family. And it is an acknowledged fact, that if the yard-cock of the family crowed at midnight, they would declare it was morning, though the watchmen and all the clocks in the city were crying out that it was twelve o'clock at night.

The great poet Goëthe concludes his "Faust" with the words "may be continued;" and our wanderings in the churchyard may be continued too. If any of my friends, or my non-friends, go on too fast for me, I go out to my favourite spot and select a mound, and bury him or her there—bury that person who is yet alive; and there those I bury must stay till they come back as new and improved characters. I inscribe their life and their deeds, looked at in my fashion, in my record; and that 's what all people ought to do. They ought not to be vexed when

any one goes on ridiculously, but bury him directly, and maintain their good humour, and keep to the *Intelligencer*, which is often a book written by the people with its hand guided.

When the time comes for me to be bound with my history in the boards of the grave, I hope they will put up as my epitaph, "A good-humoured one." And that 's my story.

A LEAF FROM THE SKY.

High up yonder, in the thin clear air, flew an angel with a flower from the heavenly garden. As he was kissing the flower, a very little leaf fell down into the soft soil in the midst of the wood, and immediately took root, and sprouted, and sent forth shoots among the other plants.

"A funny kind of slip that," said the plants.

And neither thistle nor stinging-nettle would recognize the stranger.

"That must be a kind of garden plant," said they.

And they sneered; and the plant was despised by them as being a thing out of the garden.

"Where are you coming?" cried the lofty thistles, whose leaves are all armed with thorns.

"You give yourself a good deal of space. That 's all nonsense — we are not here to support you!" they grumbled.

And winter came, and snow covered the plant; but the plant imparted to the snowy covering a lustre as if the sun was shining upon it from below as from above. When spring came, the plant appeared as a blooming object, more beautiful than any production of the forest.

And now appeared on the scene the botanical professor, who could show what he was in black and white. He inspected the plant and tested it, but found it was not included in his botanical system; and he could not possibly find out to what class it belonged.

"That must be some subordinate species," he said. "I don't know it. It 's not included in any system."

"Not included in any system!" repeated the thistles and the nettles.

The great trees that stood round about saw and heard it; but they

said not a word, good or bad, which is the wisest thing to do for people who are stupid.

There came through the forest a poor innocent girl. Her heart was pure, and her understanding was enlarged by faith. Her whole inheritance was an old Bible; but out of its pages a voice said to her, "If people wish to do us evil, remember how it was said of Joseph. They imagined evil in their hearts, but God turned it to good. If we suffer wrong — if we are misunderstood and despised — then we may recall the words of Him who was purity and goodness itself, and who forgave and prayed for those who buffeted Him and nailed Him to the cross." The girl stood still in front of the wonderful plant, whose great leaves exhaled a sweet and refreshing fragrance, and whose flowers glittered like a coloured flame in the sun; and from each flower there came a sound as though it concealed within itself a deep fount of melody that thousands of years could not exhaust. With pious gratitude the girl looked on this beautiful work of the Creator, and bent down one of the branches towards herself to breathe in its sweetness; and a light arose in her soul. It seemed to do her heart good; and gladly would she have plucked a flower, but she could not make up her mind to break one off, for it would soon fade if she did so. Therefore the girl only took a single leaf, and laid it in her Bible at home; and it lay there quite fresh, always green, and never fading.

Among the pages of the Bible it was kept; and, with the Bible, it was laid under the young girl's head when, a few weeks afterwards, she lay in her coffin, with the solemn calm of death on her gentle face, as if the earthly remains bore the impress of the truth that she now stood before her Creator.

But the wonderful plant still bloomed without in the forest. It was almost like a tree to look upon; and all the birds of passage bowed before it.

"That 's giving itself foreign airs now," said the thistles and the burdocks; "we never behave like that here."

And the black snails actually spat at the flower.

Then came the swineherd. He was collecting thistles and shrubs, to burn them for the ashes. The wonderful plant was placed bodily in his bundle.

"It shall be made useful," he said; and so said, so done.

But soon afterwards, the king of the country was troubled with a terrible depression of spirits. He was busy and industrious, but that did him no good. They read him deep and learned books, and then they read from the lightest and most superficial that they could find;

THE POOR GIRL'S TREASURE.

but it was of no use. Then one of the wise men of the world, to whom they had applied, sent a messenger to tell the king that there was one remedy to give him relief and to cure him. He said:

"In the king's own country there grows in a forest a plant of heavenly origin. Its appearance is thus and thus. It cannot be mistaken."

"I fancy it was taken up in my bundle, and burnt to ashes long ago," said the swineherd; "but I did not know any better."

"You didn't know any better! Ignorance of ignorances!"

And those words the swineherd might well take to himself, for they were meant for him, and for no one else.

Not another leaf was to be found; the only one lay in the coffin of the dead girl, and no one knew anything about that.

And the king himself, in his melancholy, wandered out to the spot in the wood.

"Here is where the plant stood," he said; "it is a sacred place."

And the place was surrounded with a golden railing, and a sentry was posted there.

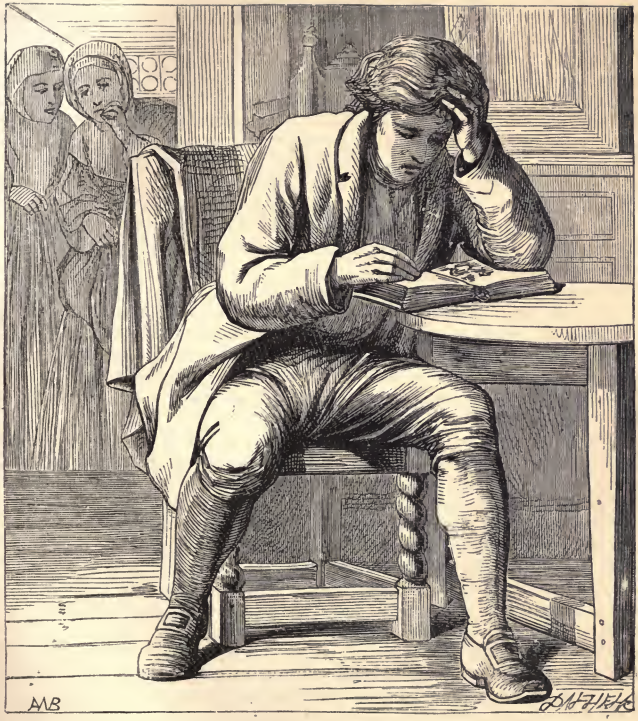
The botanical professor wrote a long treatise upon the heavenly plant. For this he was gilded all over, and this gilding suited him and his family very well. And indeed that was the most agreeable part of the whole story. But the king remained as low-spirited as before; but that he had always been, at least so the sentry said.

THE DUMB BOOK.

By the high-road in the forest lay a lonely peasant's hut; the road went right through the farmyard. The sun shone down, and all the windows were open. In the house was bustle and movement; but in the garden, in an arbour of blossoming elder, stood an open coffin. A dead man had been carried out here, and he was to be buried this morning. Nobody stood by the coffin and looked sorrowfully at the dead man; no one shed a tear for him: his face was covered with a white cloth, and under his head lay a great thick book, whose leaves consisted of whole sheets of blotting paper, and on each leaf lay a faded flower. It was a complete herbanum, gathered by him in various places; it was to be buried with him, for so he had wished it. With each flower a chapter in his life was associated.

"Who is the dead man?" we asked; and the answer was:

"The Old Student. They say he was once a brisk lad, and studied



THE POWER OF THE BOOK.

the old languages, and sang, and even wrote poems. Then something happened to him that made him turn his thoughts to brandy, and take to it; and when at last he had ruined his health, he came out here into the country, where somebody paid for his board and lodging. He was

as gentle as a child, except when the dark mood came upon him; but when it came he became like a giant, and then ran about in the woods like a hunted stag; but when we once got him home again, and prevailed with him so far that he opened the book with the dried plants, he often sat whole days, and looked sometimes at one plant and sometimes at another, and at times the tears rolled over his cheeks: Heaven knows what he was thinking of. But he begged us to put the book into the coffin, and now he lies there, and in a little while the lid will be nailed down, and he will have his quiet rest in the grave."

The face-cloth was raised, and there was peace upon the features of the dead man, and a sunbeam played upon it; a swallow shot with arrowy flight into the arbour, and turned rapidly, and twittered over the dead man's head.

What a strange feeling it is—and we have doubtless all experienced it—that of turning over old letters of the days of our youth! a new life seems to come up with them, with all its hopes and sorrows. How many persons with whom we were intimate in those days, are as it were dead to us! and yet they are alive, but for a long time we have not thought of them—of them whom we then thought to hold fast for ages, and with whom we were to share sorrow and joy.

Here the withered oak-leaf in the book reminded the owner of the friend, the school-fellow, who was to be a friend for life: he fastened the green leaf in the student's cap in the green wood, when the bond was made "for life:" where does he live now? The leaf is preserved, but the friendship has perished! And here is a foreign hothouse plant, too delicate for the gardens of the North; the leaves almost seem to keep their fragrance still. She gave it to him, the young lady in the nobleman's garden. Here is the water rose, which he plucked himself, and moistened with salt tears—the roses of the sweet waters. And here is a nettle—what tale may its leaves have to tell? What were his thoughts when he plucked it and kept it? Here is a lily of the valley, from the solitudes of the forest. Here 's an evergreen from the flower-pot of the tavern; and here's a naked sharp blade of grass.

The blooming elder waves its fresh fragrant blossoms over the dead man's head, and the swallow flies past again. "Pee-wit! pee-wit!" And now the men come with nails and hammers, and the lid is laid over the dead man, that his head may rest upon the dumb book—vanished and scattered!

THE JEWISH GIRL.

Among the children in a charity school sat a little Jewish girl. She was a good, intelligent child, the quickest in all the school; but she had to be excluded from one lesson, for she was not allowed to take part in the scripture-lesson, for it was a Christian school.

In that hour the girl was allowed to open the geography book, or to do her sum for the next day; but that was soon done; and when she had mastered her lesson in geography, the book indeed remained open before her, but the little one read no more in it; she listened silently to the words of the Christian teacher, who soon became aware that she was listening more intently than almost any of the other children.

"Read your book, Sara," the teacher said, in mild reproof; but her dark beaming eye remained fixed upon him; and once when he addressed a question to her, she knew how to answer better than any of the others could have done. She had heard and understood, and had kept his words in her heart.

When her father, a poor honest man, first brought the girl to the school, he had stipulated that she should be excluded from the lessons on the Christian faith. But it would have caused disturbance, and perhaps might have awakened discontent in the minds of the others, if she had been sent from the room during the hours in question, and consequently she stayed; but this could not go on any longer.

The teacher betook himself to the father, and exhorted him either to remove his daughter from the school, or to consent that Sara should become a Christian.

"I can no longer be a silent spectator of the gleaming eyes of the child, and of her deep and earnest longing for the words of the Gospel," said the teacher.

Then the father burst into tears.

"I know but little of the commandment given to my fathers," he said; "but Sara's mother was steadfast in the faith, a true daughter of Israel, and I vowed to her as she lay dying that our child should never be baptized. I must keep my vow, for it is even as a covenant with God Himself."

And accordingly the little Jewish maiden quitted the Christian school.

Years have rolled on.

In one of the smallest provincial towns there dwelt, as a servant in a humble household, a maiden who held the Mosaic faith. Her hair was black as ebony, her eye dark as night, and yet full of splendour and light, as is usual with the daughters of Israel. It was Sara. The expression in the countenance of the now grown-up maiden was still that of the child sitting upon the school-room bench and listening with thoughtful eyes to the words of the Christian teacher.

Every Sunday there pealed from the church the sounds of the organ and the song of the congregation. The strains penetrated into the house where the Jewish girl, industrious and faithful in all things, stood at her work.

"Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day," said a voice within her, the voice of the Law; but her Sabbath-day was a working day among the Christians, and that seemed unfortunate to her. But then the thought arose in her soul: "Doth God reckon by days and hours?" And when this thought grew strong within her, it seemed a comfort that on the Sunday of the Christians the hour of prayer remained undisturbed; and when the sound of the organ and the songs of the congregation sounded across to her as she stood in the kitchen at her work, then even that place seemed to become a sacred one to her. Then she would read in the Old Testament, the treasure and comfort of her people, and it was only in this one she could read; for she kept faithfully in the depths of her heart the words the teacher had spoken when she left the school, and the promise her father had given to her dying mother, that she should never receive Christian baptism, or deny the faith of her ancestors. The New Testament was to be a sealed book to her; and yet she knew much of it, and the Gospel echoed faintly among the recollections of her youth.

One evening she was sitting in a corner of the living-room. Her master was reading aloud; and she might listen to him, for it was not the Gospel that he read, but an old story-book, therefore she might stay. The book told of a Hungarian knight who was taken prisoner by a Turkish pasha, who caused him to be yoked with his oxen to the plough, and driven with blows of the whip till the blood came, and he almost sank under the pain and ignominy he endured. The faithful wife of the knight at home parted with all her jewels, and pledged castle and land. The knight's friends amassed large sums, for the ransom demanded was almost unattainably high: but it was collected at last, and the knight was freed from servitude and misery. Sick and exhausted, he reached his home. But soon another summons came to war against the foes of

SARA LISTENING TO THE SINGING IN THE CHURCH.

Christianity: the knight heard the cry, and he could stay no longer, for he had neither peace nor rest. He caused himself to be lifted on his war-horse; and the blood came back to his cheek, his strength appeared to return, and he went forth to battle and to victory. The very same pasha who had yoked him to the plough became his prisoner, and was

dragged to his castle. But not an hour had passed when the knight stood before the captive pasha, and said to him:

"What dost thou suppose awaiteth thee?"

"I know it," replied the Turk. "Retribution."

"Yes, the retribution of the Christian!" resumed the knight. "The doctrine of Christ commands us to forgive our enemies, and to love our fellow-man, for it teaches us that God is love. Depart in peace, depart to thy home: I will restore thee to thy dear ones; but in future be mild and merciful to all who are unfortunate."

Then the prisoner broke out into tears, and exclaimed:

"How could I believe in the possibility of such mercy! Misery and torment seemed to await me, they seemed inevitable; therefore I took poison, which I secretly carried about me, and in a few hours its effects will slay me. I must die—there is no remedy! But before I die, do thou expound to me the teaching which includes so great a measure of love and mercy, for it is great and godlike! Grant me to hear this teaching, and to die a Christian!" And his prayer was fulfilled.

That was the legend which the master read out of the old story-book. All the audience listened with sympathy and pleasure; but Sara, the Jewish girl, sitting alone in her corner, listened with a burning heart; great tears came into her gleaming black eyes, and she sat there with a gentle and lowly spirit as she had once sat on the school bench, and felt the grandeur of the Gospel; and the tears rolled down over her cheeks.

But again the dying words of her mother rose up within her:

"Let not my daughter become a Christian," the voice cried; and together with it arose the word of the Law: "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother."

"I am not admitted into the community of the Christians," she said; "they abuse me for being a Jew girl—our neighbour's boys hooted me last Sunday, when I stood at the open church-door, and looked in at the flaming candles on the altar, and listened to the song of the congregation. Ever since I sat upon the school bench I have felt the force of Christianity, a force like that of a sunbeam, which streams into my soul, however firmly I may shut my eyes against it. But I will not pain thee in thy grave, O my mother, I will not be unfaithful to the oath of my father, I will not read the Bible of the Christians. I have the religion of my people, and to that will I hold!"

And years rolled on again.

The master died. His widow fell into poverty; and the servant girl was to be dismissed. But Sara refused to leave the house: she became

the staff in time of trouble, and kept the household together, working till late in the night to earn the daily bread through the labour of her hands; for no relative came forward to assist the family, and the widow become weaker every day, and lay for months together on the bed of sickness. Sara worked hard, and in the intervals sat kindly ministering by the sick-bed: she was gentle and pious, an angel of blessing in the poverty-stricken house.

"Yonder on the table lies the Bible," said the sick woman to Sara. "Read me something from it, for the night appears to be so long—oh, so long!—and my soul thirsts for the word of the Lord."

And Sara bowed her head. She took the book, and folded her hands over the Bible of the Christians, and opened it, and read to the sick woman. Tears stood in her eyes, which gleamed and shone with ecstacy, and light shone in her heart.

"O my mother," she whispered to herself; "thy child may not receive the baptism of the Christians, or be admitted into the congregation —thou hast willed it so, and I shall respect thy command: we will remain in union together here on earth; but beyond this earth there is a higher union, even union in God! He will be at our side, and lead us through the valley of death. It is He that descendeth upon the earth when it is athirst, and covers it with fruitfulness. I understand it—I know not how I came to learn the truth; but it is through Him, through Christ!"

And she started as she pronounced the sacred name, and there came upon her a baptism as of flames of fire, and her frame shook, and her limbs tottered so that she sank down fainting, weaker even than the sick woman by whose couch she had watched.

"Poor Sara!" said the people; "she is overcome with night watching and toil!"

They carried her out into the hospital for the sick poor. There she died; and from thence they carried her to the grave, but not to the churchyard of the Christians, for yonder was no room for the Jewish girl; outside, by the wall, her grave was dug.

But God's sun, that shines upon the graves of the Christians, throws its beams also upon the grave of the Jewish girl beyond the wall; and when the psalms are sung in the churchyard of the Christians, they echo likewise over her lonely resting-place; and she who sleeps beneath is included in the call to the resurrection, in the name of Him who spake to his disciples:

"John baptized you with water, but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost!"

THE THORNY ROAD OF HONOUR.

An old story yet lives of the "Thorny Road of Honour," of a marksman, who indeed attained to rank and office, but only after a lifelong and weary strife against difficulties. Who has not, in reading this story, thought of his own strife, and of his own numerous "difficulties?" The story is very closely akin to reality; but still it has its harmonious explanation here on earth, while reality often points beyond the confines of life to the regions of eternity. The history of the world is like a magic lantern that displays to us, in light pictures upon the dark ground of the present, how the benefactors of mankind, the martyrs of genius, wandered along the thorny road of honour.

From all periods, and from every country, these shining pictures display themselves to us; each only appears for a few moments, but each represents a whole life, sometimes a whole age, with its conflicts and victories. Let us contemplate here and there one of the company of martyrs—the company which will receive new members until the world itself shall pass away.

We look down upon a crowded amphitheatre. Out of the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, satire and humour are pouring down in streams upon the audience; on the stage Socrates, the most remarkable man in Athens, he who had been the shield and defence of the people against the thirty tyrants, is held up mentally and bodily to ridicule—Socrates, who saved Alcibiades and Xenophon in the turmoil of battle, and whose genius soared far above the gods of the ancients. He himself is present; he has risen from the spectator's bench, and has stepped forward, that the laughing Athenians may well appreciate the likeness between himself and the caricature on the stage: there he stands before them, towering high above them all.

Thou juicy, green, poisonous hemlock, throw thy shadow over Athens—not thou, olive tree of fame!

Seven cities contended for the nonour of giving birth to Homer—that is to say, they contended after his death! Let us look at him as he was in his lifetime. He wanders on foot through the cities, and recites his verses for a livelihood; the thought for the morrow turns his hair grey! He, the great seer, is blind, and painfully pursues his way—the sharp thorn tears the mantle of the king of poets. His song

THE KING OF POETS.

yet lives, and through that alone live all the heroes and gods of antiquity.

One picture after another springs up from the east, from the west, far removed from each other in time and place, and yet each one forming a portion of the thorny road of honour, on which the thistle indeed displays a flower, but only to adorn the grave.

The camels pass along under the palm trees; they are richly laden with indigo and other treasures of price, sent by the ruler of the land

to him whose songs are the delight of the people, the fame of the country: he whom envy and falsehood have driven into exile has been found, and the caravan approaches the little town in which he has taken refuge. A poor corpse is carried out of the town-gate, and the funeral procession causes the caravan to halt. The dead man is he whom they have been sent to seek—Firdusi—who has wandered the thorny road of honour even to the end.

The African, with blunt features, thick lips, and woolly hair, sits on the marble steps of the palace in the capital of Portugal, and begs: he is the submissive slave of Camoens, and but for him, and for the copper coins thrown to him by the passers by, his master, the poet of the "Lusiad," would die of hunger. Now, a costly monument marks the grave of Camoens.

There is a new picture.

Behind the iron grating a man appears, pale as death, with long unkempt beard.

"I have made a discovery," he says, "the greatest that has been made for centuries; and they have kept me locked up here for more than twenty years!"

Who is the man?

"A madman," replies the keeper of the madhouse. "What whimsical ideas these lunatics have! He imagines that one can propel things by means of steam. It is Solomon de Cares, the discoverer of the power of steam, whose theory, expressed in dark words, is not understood by Richelieu—and he dies in the madhouse!"

Here stands Columbus, whom the street boys used once to follow and jeer, because he wanted to discover a new world—and he *has* discovered it. Shouts of joy greet him from the breasts of all, and the clash of bells sounds to celebrate his triumphant return; but the clash of the bells of envy soon drowns the others. The discoverer of a world, he who lifted the American gold land from the sea, and gave it to his king—he is rewarded with iron chains. He wishes that these chains may be placed in his coffin, for they witness of the world, and of the way in which a man's contemporaries reward good service.

One picture after another comes crowding on; the thorny path of honour and of fame is over-filled.

Here in dark night sits the man who measured the mountains in the moon; he who forced his way out into the endless space, among stars and planets; he, the mighty man who understood the spirit of nature, and felt the earth moving beneath his feet—Galileo. Blind and deaf he sits—an old man thrust through with the spear of suffering, and

amid the torments of neglect, scarcely able to lift his foot—that foot with which, in the anguish of his soul, when men denied the truth, he stamped upon the ground with the exclamation, "*Yet* it moves!"

Here stands a woman of childlike mind, yet full of faith and inspiration; she carries the banner in front of the combating army, and brings victory and salvation to her fatherland. The sound of shouting arises, and the pile flames up: they are burning the witch, Joan of Arc. Yes, and a future century jeers at the white lily. Voltaire, the satyr of human intellect, writes "*La Pucelle.*"

At the *Thing* or assembly at Viborg, the Danish nobles burn the laws of the king—they flame up high, illuminating the period and the law-giver, and throw a glory into the dark prison tower, where an old man is growing grey and bent. With his finger he marks out a groove in the stone table. It is the popular king who sits there, once the ruler of three kingdoms, the friend of the citizen and the peasant: it is Christian the Second. Enemies wrote his history. Let us remember his improvements of seven and twenty years, if we cannot forget his crime.

A ship sails away, quitting the Danish shores; a man leans against the mast, casting a last glance towards the Island Hueen. It is Tycho Brahé. He raised the name of Denmark to the stars, and was rewarded with injury, loss, and sorrow. He is going to a strange country.

"The vault of heaven is above me everywhere," he says, "and what do I want more?" And away sails the famous Dane, the astronomer, to live honoured and free in a strange land.

"Ay, free, if only from the unbearable sufferings of the body!" comes in a sigh through time, and strikes upon our ear. What a picture! Griffenfeldt, a Danish Prometheus, bound to the rocky island of Munkholm.

We are in America, on the margin of one of the largest rivers; an innumerable crowd has gathered, for it is said that a ship is to sail against wind and weather, bidding defiance to the elements; the man who thinks he can solve the problem is named Robert Fulton. The ship begins its passage, but suddenly it stops. The crowd begins to laugh and whistle and hiss—the very father of the man whistles with the rest.

"Conceit! Foolery!" is the cry. "It has happened just as he deserved: put the crack-brain under lock and key!"

Then suddenly a little nail breaks, which had stopped the machine for a few moments; and now the wheels turn again, the floats break the force of the waters, and the ship continues its course—and the beam of the steam-engine shortens the distance between far lands from hours into minutes.

O human race, canst thou grasp the happiness of such a minute of consciousness, this penetration of the soul by its mission, the moment in which all dejection, and every wound—even those caused by own fault—is changed into health and strength and clearness—when discord is converted to harmony—the minute in which men seem to recognize the manifestation of the heavenly grace in one man, and feel how this one imparts it to all?

Thus the thorny path of honour shows itself as a glory, surrounding the earth with its beams: thrice happy he who is chosen to be a wanderer there, and, without merit of his own, to be placed between the builder of the bridge and the earth, between Providence and the human race!

On mighty wings the spirit of history floats through the ages, and shows—giving courage and comfort, and awakening gentle thoughts—on the dark nightly background, but in gleaming pictures, the thorny path of honour; which does not, like a fairy tale, end in brilliancy and joy here on earth, but stretches out beyond all time, even into eternity!

THE OLD GRAVESTONE

In a little provincial town, in the time of the year when people say "the evenings are drawing in," there was one evening quite a social gathering in the home of a father of a family. The weather was still mild and warm. The lamp gleamed on the table; the long curtains hung down in folds before the open windows, by which stood many flower-pots; and outside, beneath the dark blue sky, was the most beautiful moonshine. But they were not talking about this. They were talking about the old great stone which lay below in the court-yard, close by the kitchen door, and on which the maids often laid the cleaned copper kitchen utensils that they might dry in the sun, and where the children were fond of playing. It was, in fact, an old gravestone.

"Yes," said the master of the house, "I believe the stone comes from the old convent churchyard; for from the church yonder, the pulpit, the memorial boards, and the gravestones were sold. My father bought the latter, and they were cut in two to be used as paving-stones;

PREBEN SCHWANE AND HIS WIFE MARTHA.

but that old stone was kept back, and has been lying in the courtyard ever since."

"One can very well see that it is a gravestone," observed the eldest of the children; "we can still decipher on it an hour-glass and a piece of an angel; but the inscription which stood below it is quite effaced, except that you may read the name of *Preben*, and a great *S* close behind it, and a little farther down the name of *Martha*. But nothing more can be distinguished, and even that is only plain when it has been raining, or when we have washed the stone.

"On my word, that must be the gravestone of Preben Schwane and his wife!"

These words were spoken by an old man; so old, that he might well have been the grandfather of all who were present in the room.

"Yes, they were one of the last pairs that were buried in the old churchyard of the convent. They were an honest old couple. I can remember them from the days of my boyhood. Every one knew them, and every one esteemed them. They were the oldest pair here in the town. The people declared that they had more than a tubful of gold; and yet they went about very plainly dressed, in the coarsest stuffs, but always with splendidly clean linen. They were a fine old pair, Preben and Martha! When both of them sat on the bench at the top of the steep stone stairs in front of the house, with the old linden tree spreading its branches above them, and nodded at one in their kind gentle way, it seemed quite to do one good. They were very kind to the poor; they fed them and clothed them; and there was judgment in their benevolence and true Christianity. The old woman died first: that day is still quite clear before my mind. I was a little boy, and had accompanied my father over there, and we were just there when she fell asleep. The old man was very much moved, and wept like a child. The corpse lay in the room next to the one where we sat; and he spoke to my father and to a few neighbours who were there, and said how lonely it would be now in his house, and how good and faithful she (his dead wife) had been, how many years they had wandered together through life, and how it had come about that they came to know each other and to fall in love. I was, as I have told you, a boy, and only stood by and listened to what the others said; but it filled me with quite a strange emotion to listen to the old man, and to watch how his cheeks gradually flushed red when he spoke of the days of their courtship, and told how beautiful she was, and how many little innocent pretexts he had invented to meet her. And then he talked of the wedding-day, and his eyes gleamed; he seemed to talk himself back into that time of joy. And yet she was lying in the next room — dead — an old woman; and he was an old man, speaking of the past days of hope! Yes, yes, thus it is! Then I was but a child, and now I am old — as old as Preben Schwane was then. Time passes away, and all things change. I can very well remember the day when she was buried, and how Preben Schwane walked close behind the coffin. A few years before, the couple had caused their gravestone to be prepared, and their names to be engraved on it, with the inscription, all but the date. In the evening the stone was taken to the churchyard, and laid over the

grave; and the year afterwards it was taken up, that old Preben Schwane might be laid to rest beside his wife. They did not leave behind them anything like the wealth people had attributed to them: what there was went to families distantly related to them—to people of whom until then one had known nothing. The old wooden house, with the seat at the top of the steps, beneath the lime tree, was taken down by the corporation; it was too old and rotten to be left standing. Afterwards, when the same fate befell the convent church, and the graveyard was levelled, Preben's and Martha's tombstone was sold, like everything else, to any one who would buy it; and that is how it has happened that this stone was not hewn in two, as many another has been, but that it still lies below in the yard as a scouring-bench for the maids and a plaything for the children. The high-road now goes over the resting-place of old Preben and his wife. No one thinks of them any more."

And the old man who had told all this shook his head scornfully.

"Forgotten! Everything will be forgotten!" he said.

And then they spoke in the room of other things; but the youngest child, a boy with great serious eyes, mounted up on a chair behind the window-curtains, and looked out into the yard, where the moon was pouring its radiance over the old stone — the old stone that had always appeared to him so tame and flat, but which lay there now like a great leaf out of a book of chronicles. All that the boy had heard about old Preben and his wife seemed concentrated in the stone; and he gazed at it, and looked at the pure bright moon and up into the clear air, and it seemed as though the countenance of the Creator was beaming over His world.

"Forgotten! Everything will be forgotten!" was repeated in the room.

But in that moment an invisible angel kissed the boy's forehead, and whispered to him:

"Preserve the seed-corn that has been entrusted to thee, that it may bear fruit. Guard it well! Through thee, my child, the obliterated inscription on the old tombstone shall be chronicled in golden letters to future generations! The old pair shall wander again arm-in-arm through the streets, and smile, and sit with their fresh healthy faces under the lime tree on the bench by the steep stairs, and nod at rich and poor. The seed-corn of this hour shall ripen in the course of time to a blooming poem. The beautiful and the good shall not be forgotten; it shall live on in legend and in song."

THE OLD BACHELOR'S NIGHTCAP.

THERE is a street in Copenhagen that has this strange name — "Hysken Stræde." Whence comes this name, and what is its meaning? It is said to be German; but injustice has been done to the Germans in this matter, for it would have to be "Häuschen," and not "Hysken." For here stood, once upon a time, and indeed for a great many years, a few little houses, which were principally nothing more than wooden booths, just as we see now in the market-places at fair-time. They were, perhaps, a little larger, and had windows; but the panes consisted of horn or bladder, for glass was then too expensive to be used in every house. But then we are speaking of a long time ago — so long since, that grandfather and great-grandfather, when they talked about them, used to speak of them as "the old times"—in fact, it is several centuries ago.

The rich merchants in Bremen and Lubeck carried on trade with Copenhagen. They did not reside in the town themselves, but sent their clerks, who lived in the wooden booths in the Häuschen Street, and sold beer and spices. The German beer was good, and there were many kinds of it, as there were, for instance, Bremen, and Prussinger, and Sous beer, and even Brunswick mumm; and quantities of spices were sold—saffron, and aniseed, and ginger, and especially pepper. Yes, pepper was the chief article here, and so it happened that the German clerks got the nickname "pepper gentry;" and there was a condition made with them in Lubeck and in Bremen, that they would not marry at Copenhagen, and many of them became very old. They had to care for themselves, and to look after their own comforts, and to put out their own fires — when they had any; and some of them became very solitary old boys, with eccentric ideas and eccentric habits. From them all unmarried men, who have attained a certain age, are called in Denmark "pepper gentry;" and this must be understood by all who wish to comprehend this history.

The "pepper gentleman" becomes a butt for ridicule, and is continually told that he ought to put on his nightcap, and draw it down over his eyes, and do nothing but sleep. The boys sing,

"Cut, cut wood!
Poor bachelor so good.
Go, take your nightcap, go to rest,
For 't is the nightcap suits you best!"

THE PEPPERER'S BOOTH.

Yes, that's what they sing about the "pepperer"—thus they make game of the poor bachelor and his nightcap, and turn it into ridicule, just because they know very little about either. Ah, that kind of nightcap no one should wish to earn! And why not?—We shall hear.

In the old times the "Housekin Street" was not paved, and the people stumbled out of one hole into another, as in a neglected bye-way; and it was narrow too. The booths leaned side by side, and stood so close together that in the summer time a sail was often stretched from one booth to its opposite neighbour, on which occasion

the fragrance of pepper, saffron, and ginger became doubly powerful. Behind the counters young men were seldom seen. The clerks were generally old boys; but they did not look like what we should fancy them, namely, with wig, and nightcap, and plush small-clothes, and with waistcoat and coat buttoned up to the chin. No, grandfather's great-grandfather may look like that, and has been thus portrayed, but the "pepper gentry" had no superfluous means, and accordingly did not have their portraits taken; though, indeed, it would be interesting now to have a picture of one of them, as he stood behind the counter or went to church on holy days. His hat was high-crowned and broad-brimmed, and sometimes one of the youngest clerks would mount a feather. The woollen shirt was hidden behind a broad linen collar, the close jacket was buttoned up to the chin, and the cloak hung loose over it; and the trousers were tucked into the broad-toed shoes, for the clerks did not wear stockings. In their girdles they sported a dinner-knife and spoon, and a larger knife was placed there also for the defence of the owner; and this weapon was often very necessary. Just so was Anthony, one of the oldest clerks, clad on high days and holy days, except that, instead of a high-crowned hat, he wore a low bonnet, and under it a knitted cap (a regular nightcap), to which he had grown so accustomed that it was always on his head; and he had two of them — nightcaps, of course. The old fellow was a subject for a painter. He was as thin as a lath, had wrinkles clustering round his eyes and mouth, and long bony fingers, and bushy grey eyebrows: over the left eye hung quite a tuft of hair, and that did not look very handsome, though it made him very noticeable. People knew that he came from Bremen; but that was not his native place, though his master lived there. His own native place was in Thuringia, the town of Eisenach, close by the Wartburg. Old Anthony did not speak much of this, but he thought of it all the more.

The old clerks of the Häuschen Street did not often come together. Each one remained in his booth, which was closed early in the evening; and then it looked dark enough in the street: only a faint glimmer of light forced its way through the little horn-pane in the roof; and in the booth sat, generally on his bed, the old bachelor, his German hymn-book in his hand, singing an evening psalm in a low voice; or he went about in the booth till late into the night, and busied himself about all sorts of things. It was certainly not an amusing life. To be a stranger in a strange land is a bitter lot: nobody cares for you, unless you happen to get in anybody's way.

Often when it was dark night outside, with snow and rain, the place

looked very gloomy and lonely. No lamps were to be seen, with the exception of one solitary light hanging before the picture of the Virgin that was fastened against the wall. The plash of the water against the neighbouring rampart at the castle wharf could be plainly heard. Such evenings are long and dreary, unless people devise some employment for themselves. There is not always packing or unpacking to do, nor can the scales be polished or paper bags be made continually; and, failing these, people should devise other employment for themselves. And that is just what old Anthony did; for he used to mend his clothes and put pieces on his boots. When he at last sought his couch, he used from habit to keep his nightcap on. He drew it down a little closer; but soon he would push it up again, to see if the light had been properly extinguished. He would touch it, press the wick together, and then lie down on the other side, and draw his nightcap down again; but then a doubt would come upon him, if every coal in the little fire-pan below had been properly deadened and put out—a tiny spark might have been left burning, and might set fire to something and cause damage. And therefore he rose from his bed, and crept down the ladder, for it could scarcely be called a stair. And when he came to the fire-pan not a spark was to be discovered, and he might just go back again. But often, when he had gone half of the way back, it would occur to him that the shutters might not be securely fastened; yes, then his thin legs must carry him downstairs once more. He was cold, and his teeth chattered in his mouth when he crept back again to bed; for the cold seems to become doubly severe when it knows it cannot stay much longer. He drew up the coverlet closer around him, and pulled down the nightcap lower over his brows, and turned his thoughts away from trade and from the labours of the day. But that did not procure him agreeable entertainment; for now old thoughts came and put up their curtains, and these curtains have sometimes pins in them, with which one pricks oneself, and one cries out "Oh!" and they prick into one's flesh and burn so, that the tears sometimes come into one's eyes; and that often happened to old Anthony—hot tears. The largest pearls streamed forth, and fell on the coverlet or on the floor, and then they sounded as if one of his heart-strings had broken. Sometimes again they seemed to rise up in flame, illuminating a picture of life that never faded out of his heart. If he then dried his eyes with his night-cap, the tear and the picture were indeed crushed, but the source of the tears remained, and welled up afresh from his heart. The pictures did not come up in the order in which the scenes had occurred in reality, for very often the most painful would come together; then

again the most joyful would come, but these had the deepest shadows of all.

The beech woods of Denmark are acknowledged to be fine, but the woods of Thuringia arose far more beautiful in the eyes of Anthony. More mighty and more venerable seemed to him the old oaks around the proud knightly castle, where the creeping plants hung down over the stony blocks of the rock; sweeter there bloomed the flowers of the apple tree than in the Danish land. This he remembered very vividly. A glittering tear rolled down over his cheek; and in this tear he could plainly see two children playing — a boy and a girl. The boy had red cheeks, and yellow curling hair, and honest blue eyes. He was the son of the merchant Anthony — it was himself. The little girl had brown eyes and black hair, and had a bright clever look. She was the burgomaster's daughter Molly. The two were playing with an apple. They shook the apple, and heard the pips rattling in it. Then they cut the apple in two, and each of them took a half; they divided even the pips, and ate them all but one, which the little girl proposed that they should lay in the earth.

"Then you shall see," she said, "what will come out. It will be something you don't at all expect. A whole apple tree will come out, but not directly."

And she put the pip in a flower-pot, and both were very busy and eager about it. The boy made a hole in the earth with his finger, and the little girl dropped the pip in it, and they both covered it with earth.

"Now, you must not take it out to-morrow to see if it has struck root," said Molly. "That won't do at all. I did it with my flowers; but only twice. I wanted to see if they were growing — and I didn't know any better then — and the plants withered."

Anthony took away the flower-pot, and every morning, the whole winter through, he looked at it; but nothing was to be seen but the black earth. At length, however, the spring came, and the sun shone warm again; and two little green leaves came up out of the pot.

"Those are for me and Molly," said the boy. "That 's beautiful — that 's marvellously beautiful! "

Soon a third leaf made its appearance. Whom did that represent? Yes, and there came another, and yet another. Day by day and week by week they grew larger, and the plant began to take the form of a real tree. And all this was now mirrored in a single tear, which was wiped away and disappeared; but it might come again from its source in the heart of old Anthony.

In the neighbourhood of Eisenach a row of stony mountains rises up,

One of these mountains is round in outline, and lifts itself above the rest, naked and without tree, bush, or grass. It is called the Venus Mount. In this mountain dwells Lady Venus, one of the deities of the heathen times. She is also called Lady Holle; and every child in and around Eisenach has heard about her. She it was who lured Tannhauser, the noble knight and minstrel, from the circle of the singers of the Wartburg into her mountain.

IMPERTINENT MOLLY.

Little Molly and Anthony often stood by this mountain; and once Molly said:

"You may knock and say, 'Lady Holle, open the door — Tannhauser is here!"

But Anthony did not dare. Molly, however, did it, though she only said the words "Lady Holle, Lady Holle!" aloud and distinctly; the rest she muttered so indistinctly that Anthony felt convinced she had

not really said anything; and yet she looked as bold and saucy as possible — as saucy as when she sometimes came round him with other little girls in the garden, and all wanted to kiss him because he did not like to be kissed and tried to keep them off; and she was the only one who dared to kiss him in spite of his resistance.

"*I* may kiss him!" she would say proudly.

That was her vanity; and Anthony submitted, and thought no more about it.

How charming and how teazing Molly was! It was said that Lady Holle in the mountain was beautiful also, but that her beauty was like that of a tempting fiend. The greatest beauty and grace was possessed by Saint Elizabeth, the patron of the country, the pious Princess of Thuringia, whose good actions have been immortalized in many places in legends and stories. In the chapel her picture was hanging, surrounded by silver lamps; but it was not in the least like Molly.

The apple tree which the two children had planted grew year by year, and became taller and taller — so tall, that it had to be transplanted into the garden, into the fresh air, where the dew fell and the sun shone warm. And the tree developed itself strongly, so that it could resist the winter. And it seemed as if, after the rigour of the cold season was past, it put forth blossoms in spring for very joy. In the autumn it brought two apples—one for Molly and one for Anthony. It could not well have produced less.

The tree had grown apace, and Molly grew like the tree. She was as fresh as an apple-blossom; but Anthony was not long to behold this flower. All things change! Molly's father left his old home, and Molly went with him, far away. Yes, in our time steam has made the journey they took a matter of a few hours, but then more than a day and a night were necessary to go so far eastward from Eisenach to the furthest border of Thuringia, to the city which is still called Weimar.

And Molly wept, and Anthony wept; but all their tears melted into one, and this tear had the rosy, charming hue of joy. For Molly told him she loved him—loved him more than all the splendours of Weimar.

One, two, three years went by, and during this period two letters were received. One came by a carrier, and a traveller brought the other. The way was long and difficult, and passed through many windings by towns and villages.

Often had Molly and Anthony heard of Tristram and Iseult, and often had the boy applied the story to himself and Molly, though the name Tristram was said to mean "born in tribulation," and that did not apply to Anthony, nor would he ever be able to think, like Tristram,

"She has forgotten me." But, indeed, Iseult did not forget her faithful knight; and when both were laid to rest in the earth, one on each side of the church, the linden trees grew from their graves over the church roof, and there encountered each other in bloom. Anthony thought that was beautiful, but mournful; but it could not become mournful between him and Molly: and he whistled a song of the old minnesinger, Walter of the Vogelverde:

"Under the lindens
Upon the heath."

And especially that passage appeared charming to him:

"From the forest, down in the vale,
Sang her sweet song the nightingale."

This song was often in his mouth, and he sang and whistled it in the moonlight nights, when he rode along the deep hollow way on horseback to get to Weimar and visit Molly. He wished to come unexpectedly, and he came unexpectedly.

He was made welcome with full goblets of wine, with jovial company, fine company, and a pretty room and a good bed were provided for him; and yet his reception was not what he had dreamt and fancied it would be. He could not understand himself — he could not understand the others: but *we* can understand it. One may be admitted into a house and associate with a family without becoming one of them. One may converse together as one would converse in a post-carriage, and know one another as people know each other on a journey, each incommoding the other and wishing that either oneself or the good neighbour were away. Yes, this was the kind of thing Anthony felt

"I am an honest girl," said Molly; "and I myself will tell you what it is. Much has changed since we were children together — changed inwardly and outwardly. Habit and will have no power over our hearts. Anthony, I should not like to have an enemy in you, now that I shall soon be far away from here. Believe me, I entertain the best wishes for you; but to feel for you what I know now one may feel for a man, has never been the case with me. You must reconcile yourself to this. Farewell, Anthony!"

And Anthony bade her farewell. No tear came into his eye, but he felt that he was no longer Molly's friend. Hot iron and cold iron alike take the skin from our lips, and we have the same feeling when we kiss it: and he kissed himself into hatred as into love.

Within twenty-four hours Anthony was back in Eisenach, though certainly the horse on which he rode was ruined.

"What matter!" he said: "I am ruined too; and I will destroy everything that can remind me of her, or of Lady Holle, or Venus the heathen woman! I will break down the apple tree and tear it up by the roots, so that it shall never bear flower or fruit more!"

But the apple tree was not broken down, though he himself was broken down, and bound on a couch by fever. What was it that raised him up again? A medicine was presented to him which had strength to do this — the bitterest of medicines, that shakes up body and spirit together. Anthony's father ceased to be the richest of merchants. Heavy days—days of trial—were at the door; misfortune came rolling into the house like great waves of the sea. The father became a poor man. Sorrow and suffering took away his strength. Then Anthony had to think of something else besides nursing his love-sorrows and his anger against Molly. He had to take his father's place—to give orders, to help, to act energetically, and at last to go out into the world and earn his bread.

Anthony went to Bremen. There he learned what poverty and hard living meant; and these sometimes make the heart hard, and sometimes soften it, even too much.

How different the world was, and how different the people were from what he had supposed them to be in his childhood! What were the minne-singer's songs to him now? — an echo, a vanishing sound! Yes, that is what he thought sometimes; but again the songs would sound in his soul, and his heart became gentle.

"God's will is best!" he would say then. "It was well that I was not permitted to keep Molly's heart — that she did not remain true to me. What would it have led to now, when fortune has turned away from me? She quitted me before she knew of this loss of prosperity, or had any notion of what awaited me. That was a mercy of Providence towards me. Everything has happened for the best. It was not her fault — and I have been so bitter, and have shown so much rancour towards her!"

And years went by. Anthony's father was dead, and strangers lived in the old house. But Anthony was destined to see it again. His rich employer sent him on commercial journeys, and his duty led him into his native town of Eisenach. The old Wartburg stood unchanged on the mountain, with "the monk and the nun" hewn out in stone. The great oaks gave to the scene the outlines it had possessed in his childish days. The Venus Mount glimmered grey and naked over the valley.

He would have been glad to cry, "Lady Holle, Lady Holle, unlock the door, and I shall enter and remain in my native earth!"

That was a sinful thought, and he blessed himself to drive it away. Then a little bird out of the thicket sang clearly, and the old minnesong came into his mind:

"From the forest, down in the vale,
Sang her sweet song the nightingale."

And here in the town of his childhood, which he thus saw again through tears, much came back into his remembrance. The paternal house stood as in the old times; but the garden was altered, and a field-path led over a portion of the old ground, and the apple tree that he had not broken down stood there, but outside the garden, on the farther side of the path. But the sun threw its rays on the apple tree as in the old days, the dew descended gently upon it as then, and it bore such a burden of fruit that the branches were bent down towards the earth.

"That flourishes!" he said. "The tree can grow!"

Nevertheless, one of the branches of the tree was broken. Mischievous hands had torn it down towards the ground; for now the tree stood by the public way.

"They break its blossoms off without a feeling of thankfulness — they steal its fruit and break the branches. One might say of the tree as has been said of some men — 'It was not sung at his cradle that it should come thus.' How brightly its history began, and what has it come to? Forsaken and forgotten—a garden tree by the hedge, in the field, and on the public way! There it stands unprotected, plundered, and broken! It has certainly not died, but in the course of years the number of blossoms will diminish; at last the fruit will cease altogether; and at last — at last all will be over!"

Such were Anthony's thoughts under the tree; such were his thoughts during many a night in the lonely chamber of the wooden house in the distant land — in the Häuschen Street in Copenhagen, whither his rich employer, the Bremen merchant, had sent him, first making it a condition that he should not marry.

"Marry! Ha, ha!" he laughed bitterly to himself.

Winter had set in early; it was freezing hard. Without, a snowstorm was raging, so that every one who could do so remained at home; thus, too, it happened that those who lived opposite to Anthony did not notice that for two days his house had not been unlocked, and that he did not show himself; for who would go out unnecessarily in such weather?

They were grey, gloomy days; and in the house, whose windows were not of glass, twilight only alternated with dark night. Old Anthony had not left his bed during the two days, for he had not the strength to rise; he had for a long time felt in his limbs the hardness of the weather. Forsaken by all, lay the old bachelor, unable to help himself. He could scarcely reach the water-jug that he had placed by his bedside, and the last drop it contained had been consumed. It was not fever, nor sickness, but old age that had struck him down. Up yonder, where his couch was placed, he was overshadowed as it were by continual night. A little spider, which, however, he could not see, busily and cheerfully span its web around him, as if it were weaving a little crape banner that should wave when the old man closed his eyes.

The time was very slow, and long, and dreary. Tears he had none to shed, nor did he feel pain. The thought of Molly never came into his mind. He felt as if the world and its noise concerned him no longer—as if he were lying outside the world, and no one were thinking of him. For a moment he felt a sensation of hunger—of thirst. Yes, he felt them both. But nobody came to tend him—nobody. He thought of those who had once suffered want; of Saint Elizabeth, as she had once wandered on earth; of her, the saint of his home and of his childhood, the noble Duchess of Thuringia, the benevolent lady who had been accustomed to visit the lowliest cottages, bringing to the inmates refreshment and comfort. Her pious deeds shone bright upon his soul. He thought of her as she had come to distribute words of comfort, binding up the wounds of the afflicted, giving meat to the hungry; though her stern husband had chidden her for it. He thought of the legend told of her, how she had been carrying the full basket containing food and wine, when her husband, who watched her footsteps, came forth and asked angrily what she was carrying, whereupon she answered, in fear and trembling, that the basket contained roses which she had plucked in the garden; how he had torn away the white cloth from the basket, and a miracle had been performed for the pious lady; for bread, and wine, and everything in the basket had been transformed into roses!

Thus the saint's memory dwelt in Anthony's quiet mind; thus she stood bodily before his downcast face, before his warehouse in the simple booth in the Danish land. He uncovered his head, and looked into her gentle eyes, and everything around him was beautiful and roseate. Yes, the roses seemed to unfold themselves in fragrance. There came to him a sweet, peculiar odour of apples, and he saw a blooming apple tree, which spread its branches above him — it was the tree which Molly and he had planted together.

And the tree strewed down its fragrant leaves upon him, cooling his burning brow. The leaves fell upon his parched lips, and were like strengthening bread and wine; and they fell upon his breast, and he felt reassured and calm, and inclined to sleep peacefully.

"Now I shall sleep," he whispered to himself. "Sleep is refreshing. To-morrow I shall be upon my feet again, and strong and well—glorious,

THE OPPOSITE NEIGHBOUR LOOKS AFTER OLD ANTHONY.

wonderful! That apple tree, planted in true affection, now stands before me in heavenly radiance——"

And he slept.

The day afterwards—it was the third day that his shop had remained closed — the snow-storm had ceased, and a neighbour from the opposite house came over towards the booth where dwelt old Anthony, who had not yet shown himself. Anthony lay stretched upon his bed — dead — with his old cap clutched tightly in his two hands! They did not put that cap on his head in his coffin, for he had a new white one.

Where were now the tears that he had wept? What had become of the pearls? They remained in the nightcap—and the true ones do not come out in the wash—they were preserved in the nightcap, and in time forgotten; but the old thoughts and the old dreams still remained in the "bachelor's nightcap." Don't wish for such a cap for yourself. It would make your forehead very hot, would make your pulse beat feverishly, and conjure up dreams which appear like reality. The first who wore that identical cap afterwards felt all that at once, though it was half a century afterwards; and that man was the burgomaster himself, who, with his wife and eleven children, was well and firmly established, and had amassed a very tolerable amount of wealth. He was immediately seized with dreams of unfortunate love, of bankruptcy, and of heavy times.

"Hallo! how the nightcap burns!" he cried out, and tore it from his head.

And a pearl rolled out, and another, and another, and they sounded and glittered.

"This must be gout," said the burgomaster. "Something dazzles my eyes!"

They were tears, shed half a century before by old Anthony from Eisenach.

Every one who afterwards put that nightcap upon his head had visions and dreams which excited him not a little. His own history was changed into that of Anthony, and became a story; in fact, many stories. But some one else may tell *them*. We have told the first. And our last word is—don't wish for "The Old Bachelor's Nightcap."

THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER.

THE storks tell their little ones very many stories, all of the moor and the marsh. These stories are generally adapted to the age and capacity of the hearers. The youngest are content if they are told "Kribble-krabble, plurre-murre" as a story, and find it charming; but the older ones want something with a deeper meaning, or at any rate something relating to the family. Of the two oldest and longest stories that have been preserved among the storks, we are only acquainted with

one, namely, that of Moses, who was exposed by his mother on the banks of the Nile, and whom the king's daughter found, and who afterwards became a great man and a prophet. That history is very well known.

The second is not known yet, perhaps, because it is quite an inland story. It has been handed down from mouth to mouth, from stork-mamma to stork-mamma, for thousands of years, and each of them has told it better and better; and now *we* 'll tell it best of all.

The first stork pair who told the story had their summer residence on the wooden house of the Viking, which lay by the wild moor in Wendsyssel; that is to say, if we are to speak out of the abundance of our knowledge, hard by the great moor in the circle of Hjörring, high up by the Skagen, the northern point of Jutland. The wilderness there is still a great wide moor-heath, about which we can read in the official description of districts. It is said that in old times there was here a sea, whose bottom was upheaved; now the moorland extends for miles on all sides, surrounded by damp meadows, and unsteady shaking swamp, and turfy moor, with blueberries and stunted trees. Mists are almost always hovering over this region, which seventy years ago was still inhabited by wolves. It is certainly rightly called the "wild moor;" and one can easily think how dreary and lonely it must have been, and how much marsh and lake there was here a thousand years ago. Yes, in detail, exactly the same things were seen then that may yet be beheld. The reeds had the same height, and bore the same kind of long leaves and bluish-brown feathery plumes that they bear now; the birch stood there, with its white bark and its fine loosely-hanging leaves, just as now; and as regards the living creatures that dwelt here—why, the fly wore its gauzy dress of the same cut that it wears now; and the favourite colours of the stork were white picked out with black, and red stockings. The people certainly wore coats of a different cut to those they now wear; but whoever stepped out on the shaking moorland, be he huntsman or follower, master or servant, met with the same fate a thousand years ago that he would meet with to-day. He sank and went down to the "marsh king," as they called him, who ruled below in the great moorland empire. They also called him "gungel king;" but we like the name "marsh king" better, and by that we 'll call him, as the storks did. Very little is known of the marsh king's rule; but perhaps that is a good thing.

In the neighbourhood of the moorland, hard by the great arm of the German Ocean and the Cattegat, which is called the Lümfjorden, lay the wooden house of the Viking, with its stone water-tight cellars, with

its tower and its three projecting stories. On the roof the stork had built his nest; and stork-mamma there hatched the eggs, and felt sure that her hatching would come to something.

One evening stork-papa stayed out very long; and when he came home he looked very bustling and important.

"I 've something very terrible to tell you," he said to the stork-mamma.

"Let that be," she replied. "Remember that I 'm hatching the eggs, and you might agitate me, and I might do them a mischief."

"You must know it," he continued. "She has arrived here — the daughter of our host in Egypt—she has dared to undertake the journey here — and she 's gone!"

"She who came from the race of the fairies? Oh, tell me all about it! You know I can't bear to be kept long in suspense when I 'm hatching eggs."

"You see, mother, she believed in what the doctor said, and you told me true. She believed that the moor flowers would bring healing to her sick father, and she has flown here in swan's plumage, in company with the other swan-princesses, who come to the North every year to renew their youth. She has come here, and she is gone!"

"You are much too long-winded!" exclaimed the stork-mamma, "and the eggs might catch cold. I can't bear being kept in such suspense!"

"I have kept watch," said the stork-papa; "and to-night, when I went into the reeds—there where the marsh ground will bear me—three swans came. Something in their flight seemed to say to me, 'Look out! That 's not altogether swan; it 's only swan's feathers!' Yes, mother, you have a feeling of intuition just as I have; you know whether a thing is right or wrong."

"Yes, certainly," she replied; "but tell me about the princess. I 'm sick of hearing of the swan's feathers."

"Well, you know that in the middle of the moor there is something like a lake," continued stork-papa. "You can see one corner of it if you raise yourself a little. There, by the reeds and the green mud, lay a great alder stump; and on this the three swans sat, flapping their wings and looking about them. One of them threw off her plumage, and I immediately recognized her as our house princess from Egypt! There she sat, with no covering but her long black hair. I heard her tell the others to pay good heed to the swan's plumage, while she dived down into the water to pluck the flowers which she fancied she saw growing there. The others nodded, and picked up the empty feather

dress and took care of it. 'I wonder what they will do with it?' thought I; and perhaps she asked herself the same question. If so, she got an answer—a very practical answer—for the two rose up and flew away with her swan's plumage. 'Do thou dive down,' they cried; 'thou shalt never see Egypt again! Remain thou here in the moor!' And so saying, they tore the swan's plumage into a thousand pieces, so that

THE PRINCESS LEFT IN THE MARSH.

the feathers whirled about like a snow-storm; and away they flew—the two faithless princesses!"

"Why, that is terrible!" said stork-mamma. "I can't bear to hear any more of it. But now tell me what happened next."

"The princess wept and lamented aloud. Her tears fell fast on the alder stump, and the latter moved; for it was not a regular alder stump, but the marsh king—he who lives and rules in the depths of the moor! I myself saw it—how the stump of the tree turned round, and ceased to be a tree stump; long thin branches grew forth from it like arms.

Then the poor child was terribly frightened, and sprang up to flee away. She hurried across to the green slimy ground; but that cannot even carry me, much less her. She sank immediately, and the alder stump dived down too; and it was he who drew her down. Great black bubbles rose up out of the moor-slime, and the last trace of both of them vanished when these burst. Now the princess is buried in the wild moor, and never more will she bear away a flower to Egypt. Your heart would have burst, mother, if you had seen it."

"You ought not to tell me anything of the kind at such a time as this," said stork-mamma; "the eggs might suffer by it. The princess will find some way of escape; some one will come to help her. If it had been you or I, or one of our people, it would certainly have been all over with us."

"But I shall go and look every day to see if anything happens," said stork-papa.

And he was as good as his word.

A long time had passed, when at last he saw a green stalk shooting up out of the deep moor-ground. When it reached the surface, a leaf spread out and unfolded itself broader and broader; close by it, a bud came out. And one morning, when stork-papa flew over the stalk, the bud opened through the power of the strong sunbeams, and in the cup of the flower lay a beautiful child—a little girl—looking just as if she had risen out of the bath. The little one so closely resembled the princess from Egypt, that at the first moment the stork thought it must be the princess herself; but, on second thoughts, it appeared more probable that it must be the daughter of the princess and of the marsh king; and that also explained her being placed in the cup of the water-lily.

"But she cannot possibly be left lying there," thought stork-papa; "and in my nest there are so many persons already. But stay, I have a thought. The wife of the Viking has no children, and how often has she not wished for a little one! People always say, 'The stork has brought a little one;' and I will do so in earnest this time. I shall fly with the child to the Viking's wife. What rejoicing there will be yonder!"

And the stork lifted the little girl out of the flower-cup, flew to the wooden house, picked a hole with his beak in the bladder-covered window, laid the charming child on the bosom of the Viking's wife, and then hurried up to the stork-mamma, and told her what he had seen and done; and the little storks listened to the story, for they were big enough to do so now.

"So you see," he concluded, "the princess is not dead, for she must have sent the little one up here; and now that is provided for too."

"Ah, I said it would be so, from the very beginning!" said the stork-mamma; "but now think a little of your own family. Our travelling time is drawing on; sometimes I feel quite restless in my wings already. The cuckoo and the nightingale have started; and I heard the quails saying that they were going too, so soon as the wind was favourable. Our young ones will behave well at the exercising, or I am much deceived in them."

The Viking's wife was extremely glad when she woke next morning and found the charming infant lying in her arms. She kissed and caressed it; but it cried violently, and struggled with its arms and legs, and did not seem rejoiced at all. At length it cried itself to sleep; and as it lay there still and tranquil, it looked exceedingly beautiful. The Viking's wife was in high glee: she felt light in body and soul; her heart leapt within her; and it seemed to her as if her husband and his warriors, who were absent, must return quite as suddenly and unexpectedly as the little one had come.

Therefore she and the whole household had enough to do in preparing everything for the reception of her lord. The long coloured curtains of tapestry, which she and her maids had worked, and on which they had woven pictures of their idols, Odin, Thor, and Freya, were hung up; the slaves polished the old shields, that served as ornaments; and cushions were placed on the benches, and dry wood laid on the fireplace in the midst of the hall, so that the flame might be fanned up at a moment's notice. The Viking's wife herself assisted in the work, so that towards evening she was very tired, and went to sleep quickly and lightly.

When she awoke towards morning, she was violently alarmed, for the infant had vanished! She sprang from her couch, lighted a pine-torch, and searched all round about; and, behold, in the part of the bed where she had stretched her feet, lay, not the child, but a great ugly frog! She was horror-struck at the sight, and seized a heavy stick to kill the frog; but the creature looked at her with such strange, mournful eyes, that she was not able to strike the blow. Once more she looked round the room — the frog uttered a low, wailing croak, and she started, sprang from the couch, and ran to the window and opened it. At that moment the sun shone forth, and flung its beams through the window on the couch and on the great frog; and suddenly it appeared as though the frog's great mouth contracted and became small and red, and its limbs moved and stretched and became beautifully symmetrical, and it was no longer an ugly frog which lay there, but her pretty child!

"What is this?" she said. "Have I had a bad dream? Is it not my own lovely cherub lying there?"

And she kissed and hugged it; but the child struggled and fought like a little wild cat.

Not on this day nor on the morrow did the Viking return, although he certainly was on his way home; but the wind was against him, for it blew towards the south, favourably for the storks. A good wind for one is a contrary wind for another.

When one or two more days and nights had gone, the Viking's wife clearly understood how the case was with her child, that a terrible power of sorcery was upon it. By day it was charming as an angel of light, though it had a wild, savage temper; but at night it became an ugly frog, quiet and mournful, with sorrowful eyes. Here were two natures changing inwardly as well as outwardly with the sunlight. The reason of this was that by day the child had the form of its mother, but the disposition of its father; while, on the contrary, at night the paternal descent became manifest in its bodily appearance, though the mind and heart of the mother then became dominant in the child. Who might be able to loosen this charm that wicked sorcery had worked?

The wife of the Viking lived in care and sorrow about it; and yet her heart yearned towards the little creature, of whose condition she felt she should not dare tell her husband on his return; for he would probably, according to the custom which then prevailed, expose the child on the public highway, and let whoever listed take it away. The good Viking woman could not find it in her heart to allow this, and she therefore determined that the Viking should never see the child except by daylight.

One morning the wings of storks were heard rushing over the roof; more than a hundred pairs of those birds had rested from their exercise during the previous night, and now they soared aloft, to travel southwards.

"All males here, and ready," they cried; "and the wives and children too."

"How light we feel!" screamed the young storks in chorus: "it seems to be creeping all over us, down into our very toes, as if we were filled with frogs. Ah, how charming it is, travelling to foreign lands!"

"Mind you keep close to us during your flight," said papa and mamma. "Don't use your beaks too much, for that tires the chest."

And the storks flew away.

At the same time the sound of the trumpets rolled across the heath, for the Viking had landed with his warriors; they were returning home,

THE VIKING'S FEAST.

richly laden with spoil, from the Gallic coast, where the people, as in the land of the Britons, sang in frightened accents:

"Deliver us from the wild Northmen!"

And life and tumultuous joy came with them into the Viking's castle on the moorland. The great mead tub was brought into the hall, the pile of wood was set ablaze, horses were killed, and a great feast was to begin. The officiating priest sprinkled the slaves with the warm blood; the fire crackled, the smoke rolled along beneath the roof; but they were accustomed to that. Guests were invited, and received handsome gifts: all feuds and all malice were forgotten. And the company drank deep, and threw the bones of the feast in each others' faces, and this was considered a sign of good humour. The bard, a kind of minstrel, but who was also a warrior, and had been on the expedition with the rest, sang them a song, in which they heard all their warlike deeds praised, and everything remarkable specially noticed. Every verse ended with the burden:

"Goods and gold, friends and foes will die; every man must one day die;
But a famous name will never die!"

And with that they beat upon their shields, and hammered the table in glorious fashion with bones and knives.

The Viking's wife sat upon the high seat in the open hall. She wore a silken dress, and golden armlets, and great amber beads: she was in her costliest garb. And the bard mentioned her in his song, and sang of the rich treasure she had brought her rich husband. The latter was delighted with the beautiful child, which he had seen in the day-time in all its loveliness; and the savage ways of the little creature pleased him especially. He declared that the girl might grow up to be a stately heroine, strong and determined as a man. She would not wink her eyes when a practised hand cut off her eyebrows with a sword by way of a jest.

The full mead barrel was emptied, and a fresh one brought in; for these were people who liked to enjoy all things plentifully. The old proverb was indeed well known, which says, "The cattle know when they should quit the pasture, but a foolish man knoweth not the measure of his own appetite." Yes, they knew it well enough; but one *knows* one thing, and one *does* another. They also knew that "even the welcome guest becomes wearisome when he sitteth long in the house;" but for all that they sat still, for pork and mead are good things; and there was high carousing, and at night the bondmen slept among the warm ashes, and dipped their fingers in the fat grease and licked them. Those were glorious times!

Once more in the year the Viking sallied forth, though the storms of autumn already began to roar: he went with his warriors to the shores of Britain, for he declared that was but an excursion across the water;

and his wife stayed at home with the little girl. And thus much is certain, that the poor lady soon got to love the frog with its gentle eyes and its sorrowful sighs, almost better than the pretty child that bit and beat all around her.

The rough damp mist of autumn, which devours the leaves of the forest, had already descended upon thicket and heath. "Birds featherless," as they called the snow, flew in thick masses, and winter was coming on fast. The sparrows took possession of the storks' nests, and talked about the absent proprietors according to their fashion; but these —the stork pair, with all the young ones—what had become of them?

The storks were now in the land of Egypt, where the sun sent forth warm rays, as it does here on a fine midsummer day. Tamarinds and acacias bloomed in the country all around; the crescent of Mahomet glittered from the cupolas of the temples, and on the slender towers sat many a stork pair resting after the long journey. Great troops divided the nests, built close together on venerable pillars and in fallen temple arches of forgotten cities. The date-palm lifted up its screen as if it would be a sunshade; the greyish-white pyramids stood like masses of shadow in the clear air of the far desert, where the ostrich ran his swift career, and the lion gazed with his great grave eyes at the marble sphinx which lay half buried in the sand. The waters of the Nile had fallen, and the whole river bed was crowded with frogs, and this spectacle was just according to the taste of the stork family. The young storks thought it was optical illusion, they found everything so glorious.

"Yes, it's delightful here; and it's always like this in our warm country," said the stork-mamma; and the young ones felt quite frisky on the strength of it.

"Is there anything more to be seen?" they asked. "Are we to go much farther into the country?"

"There 's nothing further to be seen," answered stork-mamma. "Behind this delightful region there are luxuriant forests, whose branches are interlaced with one another, while prickly climbing plants close up the paths—only the elephant can force a way for himself with his great feet; and the snakes are too big, and the lizards too quick for us. If you go into the desert, you'll get your eyes full of sand when there 's a light breeze, but when it blows great guns you may get into the middle of a pillar of sand. It is best to stay here, where there are frogs and locusts. I shall stay here, and you shall stay too."

And there they remained. The parents sat in the nest on the slender minaret, and rested, and yet were busily employed smoothing and clean-

ing their feathers, and whetting their beaks against their red stockings. Now and then they stretched out their necks, and bowed gravely, and lifted their heads, with their high foreheads and fine smooth feathers, and looked very clever with their brown eyes. The female young ones strutted about in the juicy reeds, looked slily at the other young storks, made acquaintances, and swallowed a frog at every third step, or rolled a little snake to and fro in their bills, which they thought became them well, and, moreover, tasted nice. The male young ones began a quarrel, beat each other with their wings, struck with their beaks, and even pricked each other till the blood came. And in this way sometimes one couple was betrothed, and sometimes another, of the young ladies and gentlemen, and that was just what they wanted, and their chief object in life: then they took to a new nest, and began new quarrels, for in hot countries people are generally hot-tempered and passionate. But it was pleasant for all that, and the old people especially were much rejoiced, for all that young people do seems to suit them well. There was sunshine every day, and every day plenty to eat, and nothing to think of but pleasure. But in the rich castle at the Egyptian host's, as they called him, there was no pleasure to be found.

The rich mighty lord reclined on his divan, in the midst of the great hall of the many-coloured walls, looking as if he were sitting in a tulip; but he was stiff and powerless in all his limbs, and lay stretched out like a mummy. His family and servants surrounded him, for he was not dead, though one could not exactly say that he was alive. The healing moor flower from the North, which was to have been found and brought home by her who loved him best, never appeared. His beauteous young daughter, who had flown in the swan's plumage over sea and land, to the far North, was never to come back. "She is dead!" the two returning swan-maidens had said, and they had concocted a complete story, which ran as follows:

"We three together flew high in the air: a hunter saw us, and shot his arrow at us; it struck our young companion and friend; and slowly, singing her farewell song, she sunk down, a dying swan, into the woodland lake. By the shore of the lake, under a weeping birch tree, we laid her in the cool earth. But we had our revenge. We bound fire under the wings of the swallow who had her nest beneath the huntsman's thatch; the house burst into flames, the huntsman was burnt in the house, and the glare shone over the sea as far as the hanging birch beneath which she sleeps. Never will she return to the land of Egypt."

And then the two wept. And when stork-papa heard the story, he clapped with his beak so that it could be heard a long way off.

THE KING OF EGYPT DECEIVED BY THE PRINCESSES.

"Treachery and lies!" he cried. "I should like to run my beak deep into their chests."

"And perhaps break it off," interposed the stork-mamma; "and then you would look well. Think first of yourself, and then of your family, and all the rest does not concern you."

"But to-morrow I shall seat myself at the edge of the open cupola, when the wise and learned men assemble, to consult on the sick man's state: perhaps they may come a little nearer the truth."

And the learned and wise men came together and spoke a great deal, out of which the stork could make no sense—and it had no result, either for the sick man or for the daughter in the swampy waste. But for all that we may listen to what the people said, for we have to listen to a great deal of talk in the world.

But then it's an advantage to hear what went before, what has been said; and in this case we are well informed, for we know just as much about it as stork-papa.

"Love gives life! the highest love gives the highest life! Only through love can his life be preserved." That is what they all said, and the learned men said it was very cleverly and beautifully spoken.

"That is a beautiful thought!" stork-papa said immediately.

"I don't quite understand it," stork-mamma replied: "and that's not my fault, but the fault of the thought. But let it be as it will, I've something else to think of."

And now the learned men had spoken of love to this one and that one, and of the difference between the love of one's neighbour and love between parents and children, of the love of plants for the light, when the sunbeam kisses the ground and the germ springs forth from it,—everything was so fully and elaborately explained that it was quite impossible for stork-papa to take it in, much less to repeat it. He felt quite weighed down with thought, and half shut his eyes, and the whole of the following day he stood thoughtfully on one leg: it was quite heavy for him to carry, all that learning.

But one thing stork-papa understood. All, high and low, had spoken out of their inmost hearts, and said that it was a great misfortune for thousands of people, yes, for the whole country, that this man was lying sick, and could not get well, and that it would spread joy and pleasure abroad if he should recover. But where grew the flower that could restore him to health? They had all searched for it, consulted learned books, the twinkling stars, the weather and the wind; they had made inquiries in every byway of which they could think; and at length the wise men and the learned men had said, as we have already told, that "Love begets life—will restore a father's life;" and on this occasion they had surpassed themselves, and said more than they understood. They

repeated it, and wrote down as a recipe, "Love oegets life." But how was the thing to be prepared according to the recipe? that was a point they could not get over. At last they were decided upon the point that help must come by means of the princess, through her who clave to her father with her whole soul; and at last a method had been devised whereby help could be procured in this dilemma. Yes, it was already more than a year ago since the princess had sallied forth by night, when the brief rays of the new moon were waning: she had gone out to the marble sphinx, had shaken the dust from her sandals, and gone onward through the long passage which leads into the midst of one of the great pyramids, where one of the mighty kings of antiquity, surrounded by pomp and treasure, lay swathed in mummy cloths. There she was to incline her ear to the breast of the dead king; for thus, said the wise men, it should be made manifest to her where she might find life and health for her father. She had fulfilled all these injunctions, and had seen in a vision that she was to bring home from the deep lake in the northern moorland—the very place had been accurately described to her—the lotos flower which grows in the depths of the waters, and then her father would regain health and strength.

And therefore she had gone forth in the swan's plumage out of the land of Egypt to the open heath, to the woodland moor. And the stork-papa and stork-mamma knew all this; and now we also know it more accurately than we knew it before. We know that the marsh king had drawn her down to himself, and know that to her loved ones at home she is dead for ever. One of the wisest of them said, as the stork-mamma said too, "She will manage to help herself;" and at last they quieted their minds with that, and resolved to wait and see what would happen, for they knew of nothing better that they could do.

"I should like to take away the swan's feathers from the two faithless princesses," said the stork-papa; "then, at any rate, they will not be able to fly up again to the wild moor and do mischief. I'll hide the two swan-feather suits up there, till somebody has occasion for them."

"But where do you intend to hide them?" asked stork-mamma.

"Up in our nest in the moor," answered he. "I and our young ones will take turns in carrying them up yonder, on our return, and if that should prove too difficult for us, there are places enough on the way where we can conceal them till our next journey. Certainly, one suit of swan's feathers would be enough for the princess, but two are always better. In those northern countries no one can have too many wraps."

"No one will thank you for it," quoth stork-mamma; "but you're the master. Except at breeding-time, I have nothing to say."

In the Viking's castle by the wild moor, whither the storks bent their flight when the spring approached, they had given the little girl the name of Helga; but this name was too soft for a temper like that which was associated with her beauteous form. Every month this temper showed itself in sharper outlines; and in the course of years—during which the storks made the same journey over and over again, in autumn to the Nile, in spring back to the moorland lake—the child grew to be a great girl; and before people were aware of it, she was a beautiful maiden in her sixteenth year. The shell was splendid, but the kernel was harsh and hard; and she was hard, as indeed were most people in those dark, gloomy times. It was a pleasure to her to splash about with her white hands in the blood of the horse that had been slain in sacrifice. In her wild mood she bit off the neck of the black cock the priest was about to offer up; and to her father she said in perfect seriousness,

"If thy enemy should pull down the roof of thy house, while thou wert sleeping in careless safety; if I felt it or heard it, I would not wake thee even if I had the power. I should never do it, for my ears still tingle with the blow that thou gavest me years ago—thou! I have never forgotten it."

But the Viking took her words in jest; for, like all others, he was bewitched with her beauty, and he knew not how temper and form changed in Helga. Without a saddle she sat upon a horse, as if she were part of it, while it rushed along in full career; nor would she spring from the horse when it quarrelled and fought with other horses. Often she would throw herself, in her clothes, from the high shore into the sea, and swim to meet the Viking when his boat steered near home; and she cut the longest lock of her hair, and twisted it into a string for her bow.

"Self-achieved is well-achieved," she said.

The Viking's wife was strong of character and of will, according to the custom of the times; but, compared to her daughter, she appeared as a feeble, timid woman; for she knew that an evil charm weighed heavily upon the unfortunate child.

It seemed as if, out of mere malice, when her mother stood on the threshold or came out into the yard, Helga, would often seat herself on the margin of the well, and wave her arms in the air; then suddenly she would dive into the deep well, when her frog nature enabled her to dive and rise, down and up, until she climbed forth again like a cat, and came back into the hall dripping with water, so that the green leaves strewn upon the ground floated and turned in the streams that flowed from her garments.

But there was one thing that imposed a check upon Helga, and that was the evening twilight. When that came she was quiet and thoughtful, and would listen to reproof and advice; and then a secret feeling seemed

THE TRANSFORMED PRINCESS.

to draw her towards her mother. And when the sun sank, and the usual transformation of body and spirit took place in her, she would sit quiet and mournful, shrunk to the shape of the frog, her body indeed much larger than that of the animal whose likeness she took, and for

that reason much more hideous to behold; for she looked like a wretched dwarf with a frog's head and webbed fingers. Her eyes then assumed a very melancholy expression. She had no voice, and could only utter a hollow croaking that sounded like the stifled sob of a dreaming child. Then the Viking's wife took her on her lap, and forgot the ugly form as she looked into the mournful eyes, and said,

"I could almost wish that thou wert always my poor dumb frog-child; for thou art only the more terrible when thy nature is veiled in a form of beauty."

And the Viking woman wrote Runic characters against sorcery and spells of sickness, and threw them over the wretched child; but she could not see that they worked any good.

"One can scarcely believe that she was ever so small that she could lie in the cup of a water-lily," said stork-papa, "now she 's grown up the image of her Egyptian mother. Ah, we shall never see that poor lady again! Probably she did not know how to help herself, as you and the learned men said. Year after year I have flown to and fro, across and across the great moorland, and she has never once given a sign that she was still alive. Yes, I may as well tell you, that every year, when I came here a few days before you, to repair the nest and attend to various matters, I spent a whole night in flying to and fro over the lake, as if I had been an owl or a bat, but every time in vain. The two suits of swan feathers which I and the young ones dragged up here out of the land of the Nile have consequently not been used: we had trouble enough with them to bring them hither in three journeys; and now they lie down here in the nest, and if it should happen that a fire broke out, and the wooden house were burned, they would be destroyed."

"And our good nest would be destroyed too," said stork-mamma; "but you think less of that than of your plumage stuff and of your moor-princess. You 'd best go down into the mud and stay there with her. You 're a bad father to your own children, as I said already when I hatched our first brood. I only hope neither we nor our children will get an arrow in our wings through that wild girl. Helga does n't know in the least what she does. I wish she would only remember that we have lived here longer than she, and that we have never forgotten our duty, and have given our toll every year, a feather, an egg, and a young one, as it was right we should do. Do you think I can now wander about in the courtyard and everywhere, as I was wont in former days, and as I still do in Egypt, where I am almost the playfellow of the people, and that I can press into pot and kettle as I can yonder? No, I sit up here and am angry at her, the stupid chit! And I am angry at

you too. You should have just left her lying in the water-lily, and she would have been dead long ago."

"You are much better than your words," said stork-papa. "I know you better than you know yourself."

And with that he gave a hop, and flapped his wings heavily twice, stretched out his legs behind him, and flew away, or rather sailed away, without moving his wings. He had already gone some distance, when he gave a great *flap!* The sun shone upon his grand plumage, and his head and neck were stretched forth proudly. There was power in it, and dash!

"After all, he 's handsomer than any of them," said stork-mamma to herself; "but I won't tell him so."

Early in that autumn the Viking came home, laden with booty, and bringing prisoners with him. Among these was a young Christian priest, one of those who contemned the gods of the North.

Often in those later times there had been a talk, in hall and chamber, of the new faith that was spreading far and wide in the South, and which, by means of Saint Ansgarius, had penetrated as far as Hedeby on the Schlei. Even Helga had heard of this belief in One who, from love to men and for their redemption, had sacrificed His life; but with her all this had, as the saying is, gone in at one ear and come out at the other. It seemed as if she only understood the meaning of the word "love," when she crouched in a corner of the chamber in the form of a miserable frog; but the Viking's wife had listened to the mighty history that was told throughout the lands, and had felt strangely moved thereby.

On their return from their voyage, the men told of the splendid temples, of their hewn stones, raised for the worship of Him whose worship is love. Some massive vessels, made with cunning art, of gold, had been brought home among the booty, and each one had a peculiar fragrance; for they were incense vessels, which had been swung by Christian priests before the altar.

In the deep cellars of the Viking's house the young priest had been immured, his hands and feet bound with strips of bark. The Viking's wife declared that he was beautiful as Bulder to behold, and his misfortune touched her heart; but Helga declared that it would be right to tie ropes to his heels, and fasten him to the tails of wild oxen. And she exclaimed,

"Then I would let loose the dogs—hurrah! over the moor and across the swamp! That would be a spectacle for the gods! And yet finer would it be to follow him in his career."

But the Viking would not suffer him to die such a death: he purposed to sacrifice the priest on the morrow, on the death-stone in the grove, as a despiser and foe of the high gods.

For the first time a man was to be sacrificed here.

Helga begged, as a boon, that she might sprinkle the image of the god and the assembled multitude with the blood of the priest. She sharpened her glittering knife, and when one of the great savage dogs, of whom a number were running about near the Viking's abode, ran by her, she thrust the knife into his side, "merely to try its sharpness," as she said. And the Viking's wife looked mournfully at the wild, evil-disposed girl; and when night came on and the maiden exchanged beauty of form for gentleness of soul, she spoke in eloquent words to Helga of the sorrow that was deep in her heart.

The ugly frog, in its monstrous form, stood before her, and fixed its brown eyes upon her face, listening to her words, and seeming to comprehend them with human intelligence.

"Never, not even to my lord and husband, have I allowed my lips to utter a word concerning the sufferings I have to undergo through thee," said the Viking's wife; "my heart is full of woe concerning thee: more powerful, and greater than I ever fancied it, is the love of a mother! But love never entered into thy heart—thy heart that is like the wet, cold moorland plants."

Then the miserable form trembled, and it was as though these words touched an invisible bond between body and soul, and great tears came into the mournful eyes.

"Thy hard time will come," said the Viking's wife; "and it will be terrible to me too. It had been better if thou hadst been set out by the high-road, and the night wind had lulled thee to sleep."

And the Viking's wife wept bitter tears, and went away full of wrath and bitterness of spirit, vanishing behind the curtain of furs that hung loose over the beam and divided the hall.

The wrinkled frog crouched in the corner alone. A deep silence reigned around; but at intervals a half-stifled sigh escaped from its breast, from the breast of Helga. It seemed as though a painful new life were arising in her inmost heart. She came forward and listened; and, stepping forward again, grasped with her clumsy hands the heavy pole that was laid across before the door. Silently and laboriously she pushed back the pole, silently drew back the bolt, and took up the flickering lamp which stood in the antechamber of the hall. It seemed as if a strong hidden will gave her strength. She drew back the iron bolt from the closed cellar door, and crept in to the captive. He was

THE FLIGHT.

asleep; and when he awoke and saw the hideous form, he shuddered as though he had beheld a wicked apparition. She drew her knife, cut the bonds that confined his hands and feet, and beckoned him to follow her.

He uttered some holy names, and made the sign of the cross; and when the form remained motionless at his side, he said,

"Who art thou? Whence this animal shape that thou bearest, while yet thou art full of gentle mercy?"

The frog-woman beckoned him to follow, and led him through corridors shrouded with curtains, into the stables, and there pointed to a horse. He mounted on its back; but she also sprang up before him, holding fast by the horse's mane. The prisoner understood her meaning, and in a rapid trot they rode on a way which he would never have found, out on to the open heath.

He thought not of her hideous form, but felt how the mercy and loving-kindness of the Almighty were working by means of this monstrous apparition; he prayed pious prayers, and sang songs of praise. Then she trembled. Was it the power of song and of prayer that worked in her, or was she shuddering at the cold morning twilight that was approaching? What were her feelings? She raised herself up, and wanted to stop the horse and to alight; but the Christian priest held her back with all his strength, and sang a pious song, as if that would have the power to loosen the charm that turned her into the hideous semblance of a frog. And the horse gallopped on more wildly than ever; the sky turned red, the first sunbeam pierced through the clouds, and as the flood of light came streaming down, the frog changed its nature. Helga was again the beautiful maiden with the wicked, demoniac spirit. He held a beautiful maiden in his arms, but was horrified at the sight: he swung himself from the horse, and compelled it to stand. This seemed to him a new and terrible sorcery; but Helga likewise leaped from the saddle, and stood on the ground. The child's short garment reached only to her knee. She plucked the sharp knife from her girdle, and quick as lightning she rushed in upon the astonished priest.

"Let me get at thee!" she screamed; "let me get at thee, and plunge this knife in thy body! Thou art pale as straw, thou beardless slave!"

She pressed in upon him. They struggled together in a hard strife, but an invisible power seemed given to the Christian captive. He held her fast; and the old oak tree beneath which they stood came to his assistance; for its roots, which projected over the ground, held fast the maiden's feet that had become entangled in it. Quite close to them gushed a spring; and he sprinkled Helga's face and neck with the fresh water, and commanded the unclean spirit to come forth, and blessed her in the Christian fashion; but the water of faith has no power when the well-spring of faith flows not from within.

And yet the Christian showed his power even now, and opposed more than the mere might of a man against the evil that struggled within the girl. His holy action seemed to overpower her: she dropped her hands, and gazed with frightened eyes and pale cheeks upon him who appeared

to her a mighty magician learned in secret arts; he seemed to her to speak in a dark Runic tongue, and to be making cabalistic signs in the air. She would not have winked had he swung a sharp knife or a glittering axe against her; but she trembled when he signed her with the sign of the cross on her brow and her bosom, and she sat there like a tame bird with bowed head.

THE CHRISTIAN PRIEST'S SPELL.

Then he spoke to her in gentle words of the kindly deed she had done for him in the past night, when she came to him in the form of the hideous frog, to loosen his bonds, and to lead him out to life and light; and he told her that she too was bound in closer bonds than those that had confined him, and that she should be released by his means. He would take her to Hedeby (Schleswig), to the holy Ansgarius, and yonder in the Christian city the spell that bound her would be loosed. But he would not let her sit before him on the horse, though of her own accord she offered to do so.

"Thou must sit behind me, not before me," he said. "Thy magic beauty hath a power that comes of evil, and I fear it; and yet I feel that the victory is sure to him who hath faith."

And he knelt down and prayed fervently. It seemed as though the woodland scenes were consecrated as a holy church by his prayer. The birds sang as though they belonged to the new congregation, the wild flowers smelt sweet as incense; and while he spoke the horse that had carried them both in headlong career stood still before the tall bramble bushes, and plucked at them, so that the ripe juicy berries fell down upon Helga's hands, offering themselves for her refreshment.

Patiently she suffered the priest to lift her on the horse, and sat like a somnambulist, neither completely asleep nor wholly awake. The Christian bound two branches together with bark, in the form of a cross, which he held up high as they rode through the forest. The wood became thicker as they went on, and at last became a trackless wilderness.

The wild sloe grew across the way, so that they had to ride round the bushes. The bubbling spring became not a stream but a standing marsh, round which likewise they were obliged to lead the horse. There was strength and refreshment in the cool forest breeze; and no small power lay in the gentle words, which were spoken in faith and in Christian love, from a strong inward yearning to lead the poor lost one into the way of light and life.

They say the rain-drops can hollow the hard stone, and the waves of the sea can smooth and round the sharp edges of the rocks. Thus did the dew of mercy, that dropped upon Helga, smooth what was rough, and penetrate what was hard in her. The effects did not yet appear, nor was she aware of them herself; but doth the seed in the bosom of earth know, when the refreshing dew and the quickening sunbeams fall upon it, that it hath within itself the power of growth and blossoming? As the song of the mother penetrates into the heart of the child, and it babbles the words after her, without understanding their import, until they afterwards engender thought, and come forward in due time clearer and more clearly, so here also did the Word work, that is powerful to create.

They rode forth from the dense forest, across the heath, and then again through pathless roads; and towards evening they encountered a band of robbers.

"Where hast thou stolen that beauteous maiden?" cried the robbers; and they seized the horse's bridle, and dragged the two riders from its back. The priest had no weapon save the knife he had taken from

HELGA AND THE PRIEST ATTACKED BY ROBBERS.

Helga; and with this he tried to defend himself. One of the robbers lifted his axe to slay him, but the young priest sprang aside and eluded the blow, which struck deep into the horse's neck, so that the blood spurted forth, and the creature sank down on the ground. Then Helga

seemed suddenly to wake from her long reverie, and threw herself hastily upon the gasping animal. The priest stood before her to protect and defend her, but one of the robbers swung his iron hammer over the Christian's head, and brought it down with such a crash that blood and brains were scattered around, and the priest sank to the earth, dead.

Then the robber's seized beautiful Helga by her white arms and her slender waist; but the sun went down, and its last ray disappeared at that moment, and she was changed into the form of a frog. A white-green mouth spread over half her face, her arms became thin and slimy, and broad hands with webbed fingers spread out upon them like fans. Then the robbers were seized with terror, and let her go. She stood, a hideous monster, among them; and as it is the nature of the frog to do, she hopped up high, and disappeared in the thicket. Then the robbers saw that this must be a bad prank of the spirit Loke, or the evil power of magic, and in great affright they hurried away from the spot.

The full moon was already rising. Presently it shone with splendid radiance over the earth, and poor Helga crept forth from the thicket in the wretched frog's shape. She stood still beside the corpse of the priest and the carcase of the slain horse. She looked at them with eyes that appeared to weep, and from the frog-mouth came forth a croaking like the voice of a child bursting into tears. She leant first over the one, then over the other, brought water in her hollow hand, which had become larger and more capacious by the webbed skin, and poured it over them; but dead they were, and dead they would remain, she at last understood. Soon wild beasts would come and tear their dead bodies; but no, that must not be! so she dug up the earth as well as she could, in the endeavour to prepare a grave for them. She had nothing to work with but a stake and her two hands encumbered with the webbed skin that grew between the fingers, and which were torn by the labour, so that the blood flowed over them. At last she saw that her endeavours would not succeed. Then she brought water and washed the dead man's face, and covered it with fresh green leaves; she brought green boughs and laid them upon him, scattering dead leaves in the spaces between. Then she brought the heaviest stones she could carry and laid them over the dead body, stopping up the interstices with moss. And now she thought the grave-hill would be strong and secure. The night had passed away in this difficult work—the sun broke through the clouds, and beautiful Helga stood there in all her loveliness, with bleeding hands, and with the first tears flowing that had ever bedewed her maiden cheeks.

Then in this transformation it seemed as if two natures were striving

within her. Her whole frame trembled, and she looked around, as if she had just awoke from a troubled dream. Then she ran towards the slender tree, clung to it for support, and in another moment she had climbed to the summit of the tree, and held fast. There she sat like a startled squirrel, and remained the whole day long in the silent soli-

HELGA IN THE TREE.

tude of the wood, where everything is quiet, and, as they say, dead. Butterflies fluttered around in sport, and in the neighbourhood were several ant-hills, each with its hundreds of busy little occupants moving briskly to and fro. In the air danced a number of gnats, swarm upon swarm, and hosts of buzzing flies, ladybirds, gold beetles, and other little winged creatures; the worm crept forth from the damp ground, the moles came out; but except these all was silent around—silent, and, as people say, dead—for they speak of things as they understand them.

No one noticed Helga, but some flocks of crows, that flew screaming about the top of the tree on which she sat: the birds hopped close up to her on the twigs with pert curiosity; but when the glance of her eye fell upon them, it was a signal for their flight. But they could not understand her—nor, indeed, could she understand herself.

When the evening twilight came on, and the sun was sinking, the time of her transformation roused her to fresh activity. She glided down from the tree, and as the last sunbeam vanished she stood in the wrinkled form of the frog, with the torn webbed skin on her hands; but her eyes now gleamed with a splendour of beauty that had scarcely been theirs when she wore her garb of loveliness, for they were a pair of pure, pious, maidenly eyes that shone out of the frog-face. They bore witness of depth of feeling, of the gentle human heart; and the beauteous eyes overflowed in tears, weeping precious drops that lightened the heart.

On the sepulchral mound she had raised there yet lay the cross of boughs, the last work of him who slept beneath. Helga lifted up the cross, in pursuance of a sudden thought that came upon her. She planted it upon the burial mound, over the priest and the dead horse. The sorrowful remembrance of him called fresh tears into her eyes; and in this tender frame of mind she marked the same sign in the sand around the grave; and as she wrote the sign with both her hands, the webbed skin fell from them like a torn glove; and when she washed her hands in the woodland spring, and gazed in wonder at their snowy whiteness, she again made the holy sign in the air between herself and the dead man; then her lips trembled, the holy name that had been preached to her during the ride from the forest came to her mouth, and she pronounced it audibly.

Then the frog-skin fell from her, and she was once more the beauteous maiden. But her head sank wearily, her tired limbs required rest, and she fell into a deep slumber.

Her sleep, however, was short. Towards midnight she awoke. Before her stood the dead horse, beaming and full of life, which gleamed forth from his eyes and from his wounded neck; close beside the creature stood the murdered Christian priest, "more beautiful than Bulder," the Viking woman would have said; and yet he seemed to stand in a flame of fire.

Such gravity, such an air of justice, such a piercing look shone out of his great mild eyes, that their glance seemed to penetrate every corner of her heart. Beautiful Helga trembled at the look, and her remembrance awoke as though she stood before the tribunal of judgment.

Every good deed that had been done for her, every loving word that had been spoken, seemed endowed with life: she understood that it had been love that kept her here during the days of trial, during which the crea-

HELGA IS TAKEN BACK TO THE MARSH.

ture formed of dust and spirit, soul and earth, combats and struggles; she acknowledged that she had only followed the leading of temper, and had done nothing for herself; everything had been given her, everything had happened as it were by the interposition of Providence. She bowed

herself humbly, confessing her own deep imperfection in the presence of the Power that can read every thought of the heart—and then the priest spoke.

"Thou daughter of the moorland," he said, "out of the earth, out of the moor, thou camest; but from the earth thou shalt arise. I come from the land of the dead. Thou, too, shalt pass through the deep valleys into the beaming mountain region, where dwell mercy and completeness. I cannot lead thee to Hedeby, that thou mayest receive Christian baptism; for, first, thou must burst the veil of waters over the deep moorland, and draw forth the living source of thy being and of thy birth; thou must exercise thy faculties in deeds before the consecration can be given thee."

And he lifted her upon the horse, and gave her a golden censer similar to the one she had seen in the Viking's castle. The open wound in the forehead of the slain Christian shone like a diadem. He took the cross from the grave and held it aloft. And now they rode through the air, over the rustling wood, over the hills where the old heroes lay buried, each on his dead war-horse; and the iron figures rose up and gallopped forth, and stationed themselves on the summits of the hills. The golden hoop on the forehead of each gleamed in the moonlight, and their mantles floated in the night breeze. The dragon that guards buried treasures likewise lifted up his head and gazed after the riders. The gnomes and wood-spirits peeped forth from beneath the hills and from between the furrows of the fields, and flitted to and fro with red, blue, and green torches, like the sparks in the ashes of a burnt paper.

Over woodland and heath, over river and marsh they fled away, up to the wild moor; and over this they hovered in wide circles. The Christian priest held the cross aloft; it gleamed like gold; and from his lips dropped pious prayers. Beautiful Helga joined in the hymns he sang, like a child joining in its mother's song. She swung the censer, and a wondrous fragrance of incense streamed forth thence, so that the reeds and grass of the moor burst forth into blossom. Every germ came forth from the deep ground. All that had life lifted itself up. A veil of water-lilies spread itself forth like a carpet of wrought flowers, and upon this carpet lay a sleeping woman, young and beautiful. Helga thought it was her own likeness she saw upon the mirror of the calm waters. But it was her mother whom she beheld, the moor king's wife, the princess from the banks of the Nile.

The dead priest commanded that the slumbering woman should be lifted upon the horse; but the horse sank under the burden, as though its body had been a cloth fluttering in the wind. But the holy sign

HELGA MEETS WITH HER MOTHER IN THE MARSH.

gave strength to the airy phantom, and then the three rode from the moor to the firm land.

Then the cock crowed in the Viking's castle, and the phantom shapes dissolved and floated away in air; but mother and daughter stood opposite each other

"Am I really looking at my own image from beneath the deep waters?" asked the mother.

"Is it myself that I see reflected on the clear mirror?" exclaimed the daughter.

And they approached one another, and embraced. The heart of the mother beat quickest, and she understood the quickening pulses.

"My child! thou flower of my own heart! my lotos-flower of the deep waters!"

And she embraced her child anew, and wept; and the tears were as a new baptism of life and love to Helga.

"In the swan's plumage came I hither," said the mother; "and here also I threw off my dress of feathers. I sank through the shaking moorland, far down into the black slime, which closed like a wall around me. But soon I felt a fresher stream; a power drew me down, deeper and ever deeper. I felt the weight of sleep upon my eyelids; I slumbered, and dreams hovered round me. It seemed to me that I was again in the pyramid in Egypt, and yet the waving willow trunk that had frightened me up in the moor was ever before me. I looked at the clefts and wrinkles in the stem, and they shone forth in colours, and took the form of hieroglyphics: it was the case of the mummy at which I was gazing; at last the case burst, and forth stepped the thousand-year-old king, the mummied form, black as pitch, shining black as the wood-snail or the fat mud of the swamp; whether it was the marsh king or the mummy of the pyramids I knew not. He seized me in his arms, and I felt as if I must die. When I returned to consciousness a little bird was sitting on my bosom, beating with its wings, and twittering and singing. The bird flew away from me up towards the heavy, dark covering; but a long green band still fastened him to me. I heard and understood his longing tones: 'Freedom! Sunlight! to my father!' Then I thought of my father and the sunny land of my birth, my life, and my love; and I loosened the band and let the bird soar away home to the father. Since that hour I have dreamed no more. I have slept a sleep, a long and heavy sleep, till within this hour; harmony and incense awoke me and set me free."

The green band from the heart of the mother to the bird's wings, where did it flutter now? whither had it been wafted? Only the stork had seen it. The band was the green stalk, the bow at the end, the beauteous flower, the cradle of the child that had now bloomed into beauty, and was once more resting on its mother's heart.

And while the two were locked in each other's embrace, the old stork flew around them in smaller and smaller circles, and at length shot

away in swift flight towards his nest, whence he brought out the swan-feather suits he had preserved there for years, throwing one to each of them, and the feathers closed around them, so that they soared up from the earth in the semblance of two white swans.

"And now we will speak with one another," quoth stork-papa, "now we understand each other, though the beak of one bird is differently shaped from that of another. It happens more than fortunately that you came to-night. To-morrow we should have been gone—mother, myself, and the young ones; for we're flying southward. Yes, only look at me! I am an old friend from the land of the Nile, and mother has a heart larger than her beak. She always declared the princess would find a way to help herself; and I and the young ones carried the swan's feathers up here. But how glad I am! and how fortunate that I'm here still! At dawn of day we shall move hence, a great company of storks. We'll fly first, and do you follow us; thus you cannot miss your way; moreover, I and the youngsters will keep a sharp eye upon you."

"And the lotos-flower which I was to bring with me," said the Egyptian princess, "she is flying by my side in the swan's plumage! I bring with me the flower of my heart; and thus the riddle has been read. Homeward! homeward!"

But Helga declared she could not quit the Danish land before she had once more seen her foster-mother, the affectionate Viking woman. Every beautiful recollection, every kind word, every tear that her foster-mother had wept for her, rose up in her memory, and in that moment she almost felt as if she loved the Viking woman best of all.

"Yes, we must go to the Viking's castle," said stork-papa; "mother and the youngsters are waiting for us there. How they will turn up their eyes and flap their wings! Yes, you see mother doesn't speak much—she's short and dry, but she means all the better. I'll begin clapping at once, that they may know we're coming." And stork-papa clapped in first-rate style, and they all flew away towards the Viking's castle.

In the castle every one was sunk in deep sleep. The Viking's wife had not retired to rest until it was late. She was anxious about Helga, who had vanished with a Christian priest three days before: she knew Helga must have assisted him in his flight, for it was the girl's horse that had been missed from the stables; but how all this had been effected was a mystery to her. The Viking woman had heard of the miracles told of the Christian priest, and which were said to be wrought by him and by those who believed in his words and followed him. Her passing

thoughts formed themselves into a dream, and it seemed to her that she was still lying awake on her couch, and that deep darkness reigned without. The storm drew near: she heard the sea roaring and rolling to the east and to the west, like the waves of the North Sea and the Cattegat. The immense snake which was believed to surround the span of the earth in the depths of the ocean was trembling in convulsions; she dreamed that the night of the fall of the gods had come—Ragnarok, as the heathen called the last day, when everything was to pass away, even the great gods themselves. The war-trumpet sounded, and the gods rode over the rainbow, clad in steel, to fight the last battle. The winged Valkyrs rode before them, and the dead warriors closed the train. The whole firmament was ablaze with northern lights, and yet the darkness seemed to predominate. It was a terrible hour.

And close by the terrified Viking woman Helga seemed to be crouching on the floor in the hideous frog form, trembling and pressing close to her foster-mother, who took her on her lap and embraced her affectionately, hideous though she was. The air resounded with the blows of clubs and swords, and with the hissing of arrows, as if a hailstorm were passing across it. The hour was come when earth and sky were to burst, the stars to fall, and all things to be swallowed up in Surtur's sea of fire; but she knew that there would be a new heaven and a new earth, that the corn fields then would wave where now the ocean rolled over the desolate tracts of sand, and that the unutterable God would reign; and up to Him rose Bulder the gentle, the affectionate, delivered from the kingdom of the dead; he came; the Viking woman saw him, and recognized his countenance; it was that of the captive Christian priest. "White Christian!" she cried aloud, and with these words she pressed a kiss upon the forehead of the hideous frog-child. Then the frog-skin fell off, and Helga stood revealed in all her beauty, lovely and gentle as she had never appeared, and with beaming eyes. She kissed her foster-mother's hands, blessed her for all the care and affection lavished during the days of bitterness and trial, for the thought she had awakened and cherished in her, for naming the name, which she repeated, "White Christian;" and beauteous Helga arose in the form of a mighty swan, and spread her white wings with a rushing like the sound of a troop of birds of passage winging their way through the air.

The Viking woman woke; and she heard the same noise without still continuing. She knew it was the time for the storks to depart, and that it must be those birds whose wings she heard. She wished to see them once more, and to bid them farewell as they set forth on their journey. Therefore she rose from her couch and stepped out upon the threshold,

and on the top of the gable she saw stork ranged behind stork, and around the castle, over the high trees, flew bands of storks wheeling in wide circles; but opposite the threshold where she stood, by the well where Helga had often sat and alarmed her with her wildness, sat two

THE DISGUISED PRINCESSES BID FAREWELL TO THE VIKING WOMAN.

white swans gazing at her with intelligent eyes. And she remembered her dream, which still filled her soul as if it were reality. She thought of Helga in the shape of a swan, and of the Christian priest; and suddenly she felt her heart rejoice within her.

The swans flapped their wings and arched their necks, as if they would send her a greeting, and the Viking's wife spread out her arms

towards them, as if she felt all this; and smiled through her tears, and then stood sunk in deep thought.

Then all the storks arose, flapping their wings and clapping with their beaks, to start on their voyage towards the South.

"We will not wait for the swans," said stork-mamma: "if they want to go with us they had better come. We can't sit here till the plovers start. It is a fine thing, after all, to travel in this way, in families, not like the finches and partridges, where the male and female birds fly in separate bodies, which appears to me a very unbecoming thing. What are yonder swans flapping their wings for?"

"Well, everyone flies in his own fashion," said stork-papa: "the swans in an oblique line, the cranes in a triangle, and the plovers in a snake's line."

"Don't talk about snakes while we are flying up here," said stork-mamma. "It only puts ideas into the children's heads which can't be gratified."

"Are those the high mountains of which I heard tell?" asked Helga, in the swan's plumage.

"They are storm clouds driving on beneath us," replied her mother.

"What are yonder white clouds that rise so high?" asked Helga again.

"Those are the mountains covered with perpetual snow which you see yonder," replied her mother.

And they flew across the lofty Alps towards the blue Mediterranean.

"Africa's land! Egypt's strand!" sang, rejoicingly, in her swan's plumage, the daughter of the Nile, as from the lofty air she saw her native land looming in the form of a yellowish wavy stripe of shore.

And all the birds caught sight of it, and hastened their flight.

"I can scent the Nile mud and wet frogs," said stork-mamma; "I begin to feel quite hungry. Yes; now you shall taste something nice; and you will see the maraboo bird, the crane, and the ibis. They all belong to our family, though they are not nearly so beautiful as we. They give themselves great airs, especially the ibis. He has been quite spoilt by the Egyptians, for they make a mummy of him and stuff him with spices. I would rather be stuffed with live frogs, and so would you, and so you shall. Better have something in one's inside while one is alive than to be made a fuss with after one is dead. That 's my opinion, and I am always right."

"Now the storks are come," said the people in the rich house on the banks of the Nile, where the royal lord lay in the open hall on the downy

THE KING OF EGYPT'S RECOVERY.

cushions, covered with a leopard skin, not alive and yet not dead, but waiting and hoping for the lotos-flower from the deep moorland in the far North. Friends and servants stood around his couch.

And into the hall flew two beauteous swans. They had come with the storks. They threw off their dazzling white plumage, and two lovely female forms were revealed, as like each other as two dewdrops. They bent over the old, pale, sick man, they put back their long hair, and while Helga bent over her grandfather, his white cheeks reddened, his eyes brightened, and life came back to his wasted limbs. The old man rose up cheerful and well; and daughter and granddaughter embraced him joyfully, as if they were giving him a morning greeting after a long heavy dream.

And joy reigned through the whole house, and likewise in the stork's nest, though there the chief cause was certainly the good food, especially the numberless frogs, which seemed to spring up in heaps out of the ground; and while the learned men wrote down hastily, in flying characters, a sketch of the history of the two princesses, and of the flower of health that had been a source of joy for the home and the land, the stork pair told the story to their family in their own fashion, but not till all had eaten their fill, otherwise the youngsters would have found something more interesting to do than to listen to stories.

"Now, at last, you will become something," whispered stork-mamma, "there 's no doubt about that."

"What should I become?" asked stork-papa. "What have I done? Nothing at all!"

"You have done more than the rest! But for you and the youngsters the two princesses would never have seen Egypt again, or have effected the old man's cure. You will turn out something! They must certainly give you a doctor's degree, and our youngsters will inherit it, and so will their children after them, and so on. You already look like an Egyptian doctor; at least in my eyes."

"I cannot quite repeat the words as they were spoken," said stork-papa, who had listened from the roof to the report of these events, made by the learned men, and was now telling it again to his own family. "What they said was so confused, it was so wise and learned, that they immediately received rank and presents—even the head cook received an especial mark of distinction—probably for the soup."

"And what did you receive?" asked stork-mamma. "Surely they ought not to forget the most important person of all, and you are certainly he! The learned men have done nothing throughout the whole affair but used their tongues; but you will doubtless receive what is due to you."

Late in the night, when the gentle peace of sleep rested upon the now happy house, there was one who still watched. It was not stork-

papa, though he stood upon one leg, and slept on guard—it was Helga who watched. She bowed herself forward over the balcony, and looked into the clear air, gazed at the great gleaming stars, greater and purer in their lustre than she had ever seen them in the North, and yet the same orbs. She thought of the Viking woman in the wild moorland, of the gentle eyes of her foster-mother, and of the tears which the kind soul had wept over the poor frog-child that now lived in splendour under the gleaming stars, in the beauteous spring air on the banks of the Nile. She thought of the love that dwelt in the breast of the heathen woman, the love that had been shown to a wretched creature, hateful in human form, and hideous in its transformation. She looked at the gleaming stars, and thought of the glory that had shone upon the forehead of the dead man, when she flew with him through the forest and across the moorland; sounds passed through her memory, words she had heard pronounced as they rode onward, and when she was borne wondering and trembling through the air, words from the great Fountain of love that embraces all human kind.

Yes, great things had been achieved and won! Day and night beautiful Helga was absorbed in the contemplation of the great sum of her happiness, and stood in the contemplation of it like a child that turns hurriedly from the giver to gaze on the splendours of the gifts it has received. She seemed to lose herself in the increasing happiness, in contemplation of what might come, of what would come. Had she not been borne by miracle to greater and greater bliss? And in this idea she one day lost herself so completely, that she thought no more of the Giver. It was the exuberance of youthful courage, unfolding its wings for a bold flight! Her eyes were gleaming with courage, when suddenly a loud noise in the courtyard below recalled her thoughts from their wandering flight. There she saw two great ostriches running round rapidly in a narrow circle. Never before had she seen such creatures—great clumsy things they were, with wings that looked as if they had been clipped, and the birds themselves looking as if they had suffered violence of some kind; and now for the first time she heard the legend which the Egyptians tell of the ostrich.

Once, they say, the ostriches were a beautiful, glorious race of birds, with strong large wings; and one evening the larger birds of the forest said to the ostrich, "Brother, shall we fly to-morrow, *God willing*, to the river to drink?" And the ostrich answered, "I will." At day-break, accordingly, they winged their flight from thence, flying first up on high, towards the sun, that gleamed like the eye of God—higher and higher, the ostrich far in advance of all the other birds. Proudly the

ostrich flew straight towards the light, boasting of his strength, and not thinking of the Giver or saying, "God willing!" Then suddenly the avenging angel drew aside the veil from the flaming ocean of sunlight, and in a moment the wings of the proud bird were scorched and shrivelled up, and he sank miserably to the ground. Since that time, the ostrich has never again been able to raise himself in the air, but flees timidly along the ground, and runs round in a narrow circle. And this is a warning for us men, that in all our thoughts and schemes, in all our doings and devices, we should say, "God willing." And Helga bowed her head thoughtfully and gravely, and looked at the circling ostrich, noticing its timid fear, and its stupid pleasure at sight of its own great shadow cast upon the white sunlit wall. And seriousness struck its roots deep into her mind and heart. A rich life in present and future happiness was given and won; and what was yet to come? the best of all, "*God willing.*"

In early spring, when the storks flew again towards the North, beautiful Helga took off her golden bracelet, and scratched her name upon it; and beckoning to the stork-father, she placed the golden hoop around his neck, and begged him to deliver it to the Viking woman, so that the latter might see that her adopted daughter was well, and had not forgotten her.

"That 's heavy to carry," thought the stork-papa, when he had the golden ring round his neck; "but gold and honour are not to be flung into the street. The stork brings good fortune; they 'll be obliged to acknowledge that over yonder."

"You lay gold and I lay eggs," said the stork-mamma. "But with you it 's only once in a way, whereas I lay eggs every year; but neither of us is appreciated—that 's very disheartening."

"Still one has one's inward consciousness, mother," replied stork-papa.

"But you can't hang that round your neck," stork-mamma retorted; "and it won't give you a good wind or a good meal."

The little nightingale, singing yonder in the tamarind tree, will soon be going north too. Helga the fair had often heard the sweet bird sing up yonder by the wild moor; now she wanted to give it a message to carry, for she had learned the language of birds when she flew in the swan's plumage; she had often conversed with stork and with swallow, and she knew the nightingale would understand her. So she begged the little bird to fly to the beech wood, on the peninsula of Jutland, where the grave-hill had been reared with stones and branches, and begged the nightingale to persuade all other little birds that they

A MESSAGE TO THE VIKING WOMAN.

might build their nests around the place, so that the song of birds should resound over that sepulchre for evermore. And the nightingale flew away—and time flew away.

In autumn the eagle stood upon the pyramid and saw a stately train of richly laden camels approaching, and richly attired armed men on foaming Arab steeds, shining white as silver, with pink trembling nostrils, and great thick manes hanging down almost over their slender legs.

Wealthy guests, a royal prince of Arabia, handsome as a prince should be, came into the proud mansion on whose roof the stork's nests now stood empty: those who had inhabited the nest were away now, in the far north; but they would soon return. And, indeed, they returned on that very day that was so rich in joy and gladness. Here a marriage was celebrated, and fair Helga was the bride, shining in jewels and silk. The bridegroom was the young Arab prince, and bride and bridegroom sat together at the upper end of the table, between mother and grandfather.

But her gaze was not fixed upon the bridegroom, with his manly sunbrowned cheeks, round which a black beard curled; she gazed not at his dark fiery eyes that were fixed upon her—but far away at a gleaming star that shone down from the sky.

Then strong wings were heard beating the air. The storks were coming home, and however tired the old stork pair might be from the journey, and however much they needed repose, they did not fail to come down at once to the balustrades of the verandah; for they knew what feast was being celebrated. Already on the frontier of the land they had heard that Helga had caused their figures to be painted on the wall—for did they not belong to her history?

"That's very pretty and suggestive," said stork-papa.

"But it's very little," observed stork-mamma. "They could not possibly have done less."

And when Helga saw them, she rose and came on to the verandah, to stroke the backs of the storks. The old pair waved their heads and bowed their necks, and even the youngest among the young ones felt highly honoured by the reception.

And Helga looked up to the gleaming star, which seemed to glow purer and purer; and between the star and herself there floated a form, purer than the air, and visible through it: it floated quite close to her. It was the spirit of the dead Christian priest; he too was coming to her wedding feast—coming from heaven.

"The glory and brightness yonder outshines everything that is known on earth!" he said.

And fair Helga begged so fervently, so beseechingly, as she had never yet prayed, that it might be permitted her to gaze in there for one single moment, that she might be allowed to cast but a single glance into the brightness that beamed in the kingdom.

Then he bore her up amid splendour and glory. Not only around her, but within her, sounded voices and beamed a brightness that words cannot express.

"Now we must go back; thou wilt be missed," he said.

"Only one more look!" she begged. "But one short minute more!"

"We must go back to the earth. The guests will all depart."

"Only one more look—the last."

And Helga stood again in the verandah; but the marriage lights without had vanished, and the lamps in the hall were extinguished, and the storks were gone—nowhere a guest to be seen—no bridegroom—all seemed to have been swept away in those few short minutes!

Then a great dread came upon her. Alone she went through the empty great hall into the next chamber. Strange warriors slept yonder. She opened a side door which led into her own chamber; and, as she thought to step in there, she suddenly found herself in the garden; but yet it had not looked thus here before — the sky gleamed red — the morning dawn was come.

Three minutes only in heaven and a whole night on earth had passed away!

Then she saw the storks again. She called to them, spoke their language; and stork-papa turned his head towards her, listened to her words, and drew near.

"You speak our language," he said; "what do you wish? Why do you appear here — you, a strange woman?"

"It is I—it is Helga—dost thou not know me? Three minutes ago we were speaking together yonder in the verandah!"

"That 's a mistake," said the stork; "you must have dreamt all that!"

"No, no!" she persisted. And she reminded him of the Viking's castle, and of the great ocean, and of the journey hither.

Then stork-papa winked with his eyes, and said:

"Why, that 's an old story, which I heard from the time of my great-grandfather. There certainly was here in Egypt a princess of that kind from the Danish land, but she vanished on the evening of her wedding-day, many hundred years ago, and never came back! You may read about it yourself yonder on the monument in the garden; there you 'll find swans and storks sculptured, and at the top you are yourself in white marble!"

And thus it was. Helga saw it, and understood it, and sank on her knees.

The sun burst forth in glory; and as, in time of yore, the frog-shape had vanished in its beams, and the beautiful form had stood displayed, so now in the light a beauteous form, clearer, purer than air — a beam of brightness — flew up into heaven!

The body crumbled to dust; and a faded lotos-flower lay on the spot where Helga had stood.

"Well, that 's a new ending to the story," said stork-papa. "I had certainly not expected it. But I like it very well."

"But what will the young ones say to it?" said stork-mamma.

"Yes, certainly, that 's the important point," replied he.

THE LAST DREAM OF THE OLD OAK TREE.

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

In the forest, high up on the steep shore, hard by the open sea coast, stood a very old oak tree. It was exactly three hundred and sixty-five years old, but that long time was not more for the tree than just as many days would be to us men. We wake by day and sleep through the night, and then we have our dreams: it is different with the tree, which keeps awake through three seasons of the year, and does not get its sleep till winter comes. Winter is its time for rest, its night after the long day which is called spring, summer, and autumn.

On many a warm summer day the Ephemera, the fly that lives but for a day, had danced around his crown—had lived, enjoyed, and felt happy; and then rested for a moment in quiet bliss the tiny creature, on one of the great fresh oak leaves; and then the tree always said:

"Poor little thing! Your whole life is but a single day! How very short! It's quite melancholy!"

"Melancholy! Why do you say that?" the Ephemera would then always reply. "It's wonderfully bright, warm, and beautiful all around me, and that makes me rejoice!"

"But only one day, and then it's all done!"

"Done!" repeated the Ephemera. "What's the meaning of *done?* Are you *done,* too?"

"No; I shall perhaps live for thousands of your days, and my day is whole seasons long! It's something so long, that you can't at all manage to reckon it out."

"No? then I don't understand you. You say you have thousands of

my days; but I have thousands of moments, in which I can be merry and happy. Does all the beauty of this world cease when you die?"

"No," replied the Tree; "it will certainly last much longer—far longer than I can possibly think."

"Well, then, we have the same time, only that we reckon differently."

And the Ephemera danced and floated in the air, and rejoiced in her delicate wings of gauze and velvet, and rejoiced in the balmy breezes laden with the fragrance of meadows and of wild roses and elder-flowers, of the garden hedges, wild thyme, and mint, and daisies; the scent of these was all so strong that the Ephemera was almost intoxicated. The day was long and beautiful, full of joy and of sweet feeling, and when the sun sank low the little fly felt very agreeably tired of all its happiness and enjoyment. The delicate wings would not carry it any more, and quietly and slowly it glided down upon the soft grass blade, nodded its head as well as it could nod, and went quietly to sleep —and was dead.

"Poor little Ephemera!" said the Oak. "That was a terribly short life!"

And on every summer day the same dance was repeated, the same question and answer, and the same sleep. The same thing was repeated through whole generations of ephemera, and all of them felt equally merry and equally happy.

The Oak stood there awake through the spring morning, the noon of summer, and the evening of autumn; and its time of rest, its night, was coming on apace. Winter was approaching.

Already the storms were singing their "good night, good night!" Here fell a leaf, and there fell a leaf.

"We'll rock you, and dandle you! Go to sleep, go to sleep! We sing you to sleep, we shake you to sleep, but it does you good in your old twigs, does it not? They seem to crack for very joy! Sleep sweetly, sleep sweetly! It's your three hundred and sixty-fifth night. Properly speaking, you're only a stripling as yet! Sleep sweetly! The clouds strew down snow, there will be quite a coverlet, warm and protecting, around your feet. Sweet sleep to you, and pleasant dreams!"

And the Oak Tree stood there, denuded of all its leaves, to sleep through the long winter, and to dream many a dream, always about something that had happened to it, just as in the dreams of men.

The great Oak had once been small—indeed, an acorn had been its cradle. According to human computation, it was now in its fourth century. It was the greatest and best tree in the forest; its crown towered far above all the other trees, and could be descried from afar

across the sea, so that it served as a landmark to the sailors: the tree had no idea how many eyes were in the habit of seeking it. High up in its green summit the wood-pigeon built her nest, and the cuckoo sat in its boughs, and sang his song; and in autumn, when the leaves looked like thin plates of copper, the birds of passage came and rested there, before they flew away across the sea; but now it was winter, and the tree stood there leafless, so that every one could see how gnarled and crooked the branches were that shot forth from its trunk. Crows and rooks came and took their seat by turns in the boughs, and spoke of the hard times which were beginning, and of the difficulty of getting a living in winter.

It was just at the holy Christmas time, when the tree dreamed its most glorious dream.

The tree had a distinct feeling of the festive time, and fancied he heard the bells ringing from the churches all around; and yet it seemed as if it were a fine summer's day, mild and warm. Fresh and green he spread out his mighty crown; the sunbeams played among the twigs and the leaves; the air was full of the fragrance of herbs and blossoms; gay butterflies chased each other to and fro. The ephemeral insects danced as if all the world were created merely for them to dance and be merry in. All that the tree had experienced for years and years, and that had happened around him, seemed to pass by him again, as in a festive pageant. He saw the knights of ancient days ride by with their noble dames on gallant steeds, with plumes waving in their bonnets and falcons on their wrists. The hunting horn sounded, and the dogs barked. He saw hostile warriors in coloured jerkins and with shining weapons, with spear and halbert, pitching their tents and striking them again. The watch-fires flamed up anew, and men sang and slept under the branches of the tree. He saw loving couples meeting near his trunk, happily, in the moonshine; and they cut the initials of their names in the grey-green bark of his stem. Once—but long years had rolled by since then—citherns and Æolian harps had been hung up on his boughs by merry wanderers, now they hung there again, and once again they sounded in tones of marvellous sweetness. The wood-pigeons cooed, as if they were telling what the tree felt in all this, and the cuckoo called out to tell him how many summer days he had yet to live.

Then it appeared to him as if new life were rippling down into the remotest fibre of his root, and mounting up into his highest branches, to the tops of the leaves. The tree felt that he was stretching and spreading himself, and through his root he felt that there was life and motion even in the ground itself. He felt his strength increase, he

THE LOVERS AT THE OLD OAK TREE.

grew higher, his stem shot up unceasingly, and he grew more and more, his crown became fuller, and spread out; and in proportion as the tree grew, he felt his happiness increase, and his joyous hope that he should reach even higher—quite up to the warm brilliant sun.

Already had he grown high above the clouds, which floated past beneath his crown like dark troops of passage-birds, or like great white swans. And every leaf of the tree had the gift of sight, as if it had eyes wherewith to see; the stars became visible in broad daylight, great

and sparkling; each of them sparkled like a pair of eyes, mild and clear. They recalled to his memory well-known gentle eyes, eyes of children, eyes of lovers who had met beneath his boughs.

It was a marvellous spectacle, and one full of happiness and joy! And yet amid all this happiness the tree felt a longing, a yearning desire that all other trees of the wood beneath him, and all the bushes, and herbs, and flowers, might be able to rise with him, that they too might see this splendour, and experience this joy. The great majestic oak was not quite happy in his happiness, while he had not them all, great and little, about him; and this feeling of yearning trembled through his every twig, through his every leaf, warmly and fervently as through a human heart.

The crown of the tree waved to and fro, as if he sought something in his silent longing, and he looked down. Then he felt the fragrance of thyme, and soon afterwards the more powerful scent of honeysuckle and violets; and he fancied he heard the cuckoo answering him.

Yes, through the clouds the green summits of the forest came peering up, and under himself the Oak saw the other trees, as they grew and raised themselves aloft. Bushes and herbs shot up high, and some tore themselves up bodily by the roots to rise the quicker. The birch was the quickest of all. Like a white streak of lightning, its slender stem shot upwards in a zigzag line, and the branches spread around it like green gauze and like banners; the whole woodland natives, even to the brown plumed rushes, grew up with the rest, and the birds came too, and sang; and on the grass blade that fluttered aloft like a long silken ribbon into the air, sat the grasshopper cleaning his wings with his leg; the May beetles hummed, and the bees murmured, and every bird sang in his appointed manner; all was song and sound of gladness up into the high heaven.

"But the little blue flower by the water-side, where is that?" said the Oak; "and the purple bell-flower and the daisy?" for, you see, the old Oak Tree wanted to have them all about him.

"We are here—we are here!" was shouted and sung in reply.

"But the beautiful thyme of last summer—and in the last year there was certainly a place here covered with lilies of the valley! and the wild apple tree that blossomed so splendidly! and all the glory of the wood that came year by year—if that had only just been born, it might have been here now!"

"We are here, we are here!" replied voices still higher in the air. It seemed as if they had flown on before.

"Why, that is beautiful, indescribably beautiful!" exclaimed the old

Oak Tree, rejoicingly. "I have them all around me, great and small; not one has been forgotten! How can so much happiness be imagined? How can it be possible?"

"In heaven, in the better land, it can be imagined, and it is possible!" the reply sounded through the air.

And the old tree, who grew on and on, felt how his roots were tearing themselves free from the ground.

"That's right, that's better than all!" said the tree. "Now no fetters hold me! I can fly up now, to the very highest, in glory and in light! And all my beloved ones are with me, great and small—all of them, all!"

That was the dream of the old Oak Tree; and while he dreamt thus a mighty storm came rushing over land and sea—at the holy Christmas tide. The sea rolled great billows towards the shore; there was a cracking and crashing in the tree—his root was torn out of the ground in the very moment while he was dreaming that his root freed itself from the earth. He fell. His three hundred and sixty-five years were now as the single day of the Ephemera.

On the morning of the Christmas festival, when the sun rose, the storm had subsided. From all the churches sounded the festive bells, and from every hearth, even from the smallest hut, arose the smoke in blue clouds, like the smoke from the altars of the druids of old at the feast of thanks offerings. The sea became gradually calm, and on board a great ship in the offing, that had fought successfully with the tempest, all the flags were displayed, as a token of joy suitable to the festive day.

"The tree is down—the old Oak Tree, our landmark on the coast!" said the sailors. "It fell in the storm of last night. Who can replace it? No one can."

This was the funeral oration, short but well meant, that was given to the tree, which lay stretched on the snowy covering on the sea shore; and over its prostrate form sounded the notes of a song from the ship, a carol of the joys of Christmas, and of the redemption of the soul of man by His blood, and of eternal life.

"Sing, sing aloud, this blessed morn—
It is fulfilled—and He is born,
Oh, joy without compare!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

Thus sounded the old psalm tune, and every one on board the ship felt lifted up in his own way, through the song and the prayer, just as the old tree had felt lifted up in its last, its most beauteous dream in the Christmas night.

THE BELL-DEEP.

"DING-DONG! DING-DONG!" It sounds up from the "bell-deep," in the Odense-Au. Every child in the old town of Odense, on the island of Fünen, knows the Au, which washes the gardens round about the town, and flows on under the wooden bridges from the dam to the water-mill. In the Au grow the yellow water-lilies and brown feathery reeds; the dark velvety flag grows there, high and thick; old, decayed willows, slanting and tottering, hang far out over the stream beside the monks' meadow and by the bleaching-ground; but opposite there are gardens upon gardens, each different from the rest, some with pretty flowers and bowers like little dolls' pleasure-grounds, often displaying only cabbage and other kitchen plants; and here and there the gardens cannot be seen at all, for the great elder trees that spread themselves out by the bank, and hang far out over the streaming waters, which are deeper here and there than an oar can fathom. Opposite the old nunnery is the deepest place, which is called the "bell-deep," and there dwells the old water spirit, the "Au-mann." This spirit sleeps through the day while the sun shines down upon the water; but in starry and moonlit nights he shows himself. He is very old: grandmother says that she has heard her own grandmother tell of him; he is said to lead a solitary life, and to have nobody with whom he can converse save the great old church bell. Once the bell hung in the church tower; but now there is no trace left of the tower or of the church, which was called St. Alban's.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong!" sounded the bell, when the tower still stood there; and one evening, while the sun was setting, and the bell was swinging away bravely, it broke loose and came flying down through the air, the brilliant metal shining in the ruddy beam.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong! Now I'll retire to rest!" sang the bell, and flew down into the Odense-Au where it is deepest; and that is why the place is called the "bell-deep." But the bell got neither rest nor sleep. Down in the Au-mann's haunt it sounds and rings, so that the tones sometimes pierce upward through the waters; and many people maintain that its strains forebode the death of some one; but that is not true, for then the bell is only talking with the Au-mann, who is now no longer alone.

And what is the bell telling? It is old, very old, as we have already observed; it was there long before grandmother's grandmother was born; and yet it is but a child in comparison with the Au-mann, who is an old quiet personage, an oddity, with his hose of eel-skin, and his scaly jacket with the yellow lilies for buttons, and a wreath of reed in his hair and seaweed in his beard; but he looks very pretty for all that.

THE AU-MANN LISTENING TO THE BELL.

What the bell tells? To repeat it all would require years and days; for year by year it is telling the old stories, sometimes short ones, sometimes long ones, according to its whim; it tells of old times, of the dark hard times, thus:

"In the church of St. Alban, the monk mounted up into the tower. He was young and handsome, but thoughtful exceedingly. He looked through the loophole out upon the Odense-Au, when the bed of the water was yet broad, and the monks' meadow was still a lake; he looked

out over it, and over the rampart, and over the nuns' hill opposite, where the convent lay, and the light gleamed forth from the nun's cell; he had known the nun right well, and he thought of her, and his heart beat quicker as he thought. Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

Yes, this was the story the bell told.

"Into the tower came also the dapper man-servant of the bishop; and when I, the bell, who am made of metal, rang hard and loud, and swung to and fro, I might have beaten out his brains. He sat down close under me, and played with two little sticks as if they had been a stringed instrument; and he sang to it. 'Now I may sing it out aloud, though at other times I may not whisper it. I may sing of everything that is kept concealed behind lock and bars. Yonder it is cold and wet. The rats are eating her up alive! Nobody knows of it! Nobody hears of it! Not even now, for the bell is ringing and singing its loud Ding-dong! ding-dong.'

"There was a king in those days; they called him Canute. He bowed himself before bishop and monk; but when he offended the free peasants with heavy taxes and hard words, they seized their weapons and put him to flight like a wild beast. He sought shelter in the church, and shut gate and door behind him. The violent band surrounded the church; I heard tell of it. The crows, ravens, and magpies started up in terror at the yelling and shouting that sounded around. They flew into the tower and out again, they looked down upon the throng below, and they also looked into the windows of the church, and screamed out aloud what they saw there. King Canute knelt before the altar in prayer, his brothers Eric and Benedict stood by him as a guard with drawn swords; but the king's servant, the treacherous Blake, betrayed his master; the throng in front of the church knew where they could hit the king, and one of them flung a stone through a pane of glass, and the king lay there dead! The cries and screams of the savage horde and of the birds sounded through the air, and I joined in it also; for I sang 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"The church bell hangs high and looks far around, and sees the birds around it, and understands their language; the wind roars in upon it through windows and loopholes; and the wind knows everything, for he gets it from the air, which encircles all things, and the church bell understands his tongue, and rings it out into the world, 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"But it was too much for me to hear and to know; I was not able any longer to ring it out. I became so tired, so heavy, that the beam broke, and I flew out into the gleaming Au where the water is deepest,

and where the Au-mann lives, solitary and alone; and year by year I tell him what I have heard and what I know. Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

Thus it sounds complainingly out of the bell-deep in the Odense-Au: that is what grandmother told us.

But the schoolmaster says that there was not any bell that rung down there, for that it could not do so; and that no Au-mann dwelt yonder, for there was no Au-mann at all! And when all the other church bells are sounding sweetly, he says that it is not really the bells that are sounding, but that it is the air itself which sends forth the notes; and grandmother said to us that the bell itself said it was the air who told it him, consequently they are agreed on that point, and this much is sure. "Be cautious, cautious, and take good heed to thyself," they both say.

The air knows everything. It is around us, it is in us, it talks of our thoughts and of our deeds, and it speaks longer of them than does the bell down in the depths of the Odense-Au where the Au-mann dwells; it rings it out into the vault of heaven, far, far out, for ever and ever, till the heaven bells sound "Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

THE PUPPET SHOWMAN.

On board the steamer was an elderly man with such a merry face that, if it did not belie him, he must have been the happiest fellow in creation. And, indeed, he declared he was the happiest man; I heard it out of his own mouth. He was a Dane, a travelling theatre director. He had all his company with him in a large box, for he was proprietor of a puppet-show. His inborn cheerfulness, he said, had been *purified* by a Polytechnic candidate, and the experiment had made him completely happy. I did not at first understand all this, but afterwards he explained the whole story to me, and here it is. He told me:

"It was in the little town of Slagelse I gave a representation in the hall of the posting-house, and had a brilliant audience, entirely a juvenile one, with the exception of two respectable matrons. All at once a person in black, of student-like appearance, came into the room and sat down; he laughed aloud at the telling parts, and applauded quite appropriately. That was quite an unusual spectator for me! I felt anxious to know who he was, and I heard he was a candidate from the Poly-

technic Institution in Copenhagen, who had been sent out to instruct the folks in the provinces. Punctually at eight o'clock my performance closed; for children must go early to bed, and a manager must consult the convenience of his public. At nine o'clock the candidate commenced his lecture, with experiments, and now I formed part of *his* audience. It was wonderful to hear and to see. The greater part of it was beyond my scope; but still it made me think that if we men can find out so much, we must be surely intended to last longer than the little span until we are hidden away in the earth. They were quite miracles in a small way that he showed, and yet everything flowed as naturally as water! At the time of Moses and the prophets such a man would have been received among the sages of the land; in the middle ages they would have burned him at a stake. All night long I could not go to sleep. And the next evening, when I gave another performance, and the candidate was again present, I felt fairly overflowing with humour. I once heard from a player that when he acted a lover he always thought of one particular lady among the audience; he only played for her, and forgot all the rest of the house; and now the Polytechnic candidate was my 'she,' my only auditor, for whom alone I played. And when the performance was over, all the puppets were called before the curtain, and the Polytechnic candidate invited me into his room to take a glass of wine; and he spoke of my comedies, and I of his science; and I believe we were both equally pleased. But I had the best of it, for there was much in what he did of which he could not always give me an explanation. For instance, that a piece of iron that falls through a spiral should become magnetic. Now, how does that happen? The spirit comes upon it; but whence does it come? It is as with people in this world; they are made to tumble through the spiral of this world, and the spirit comes upon them, and there stands a Napoleon, or a Luther, or a person of that kind. 'The whole world is a series of miracles,' said the candidate; 'but we are so accustomed to them that we call them every-day matters.' And he went on explaining things to me until my skull seemed lifted up over my brain, and I declared that if I were not an old fellow I would at once visit the Polytechnic Institution, that I might learn to look at the sunny side of the world, though I am one of the happiest of men. 'One of the happiest!' said the candidate, and he seemed to take real pleasure in it. 'Are you happy?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'and they welcome me in all the towns where I come with my company; but I certainly have *one* wish, which sometimes lies like lead, like an Alp, upon my good humour: I should like to become a real theatrical manager, the director of a real troupe

THE ANIMATED PUPPETS.

of men and women!' 'I see,' he said, 'you would like to have life breathed into your puppets, so that they might be real actors, and you their director; and would you then be quite happy?' He did not believe it; but I believed it, and we talked it over all manner of ways without coming any nearer to an agreement; but we clanked our glasses together, and the wine was excellent. There was some magic in it, or I should certainly have become tipsy. But that did not happen; I retained my clear view of things, and somehow there was sunshine in

the room, and sunshine beamed out of the eyes of the Polytechnic candidate. It made me think of the old stories of the gods, in their eternal youth, when they still wandered upon earth and paid visits to the mortals; and I said so to him, and he smiled, and I could have sworn he was one of the ancient gods in disguise, or that, at any rate, he belonged to the family! and certainly he must have been something of the kind, for my highest wish was to have been fulfilled, the puppets were to be gifted with life, and I was to be director of a real company. We drank to my success and clinked our glasses. He packed all my dolls into a box, bound the box on my back, and then let me fall through a spiral. I heard myself tumbling, and then I was lying on the floor—I know that quite well—and the whole company sprang out of the box. The spirit had come upon all of us: all the puppets had become distinguished artists, so they said themselves, and I was the director. All was ready for the first representation; the whole company wanted to speak to me, and the public also. The dancing lady said the house would fall down if she did not keep it up by standing on one leg; for she was the great genius, and begged to be treated as such. The lady who acted the queen wished to be treated off the stage as a queen, or else she should get out of practice. The man who was only employed to deliver a letter gave himself just as many airs as the first lover, for he declared the little ones were just as important as the great ones, and that all were of equal consequence, considered as an artistic whole. The hero would only play parts composed of nothing but points; for those brought him down the applause. The prima donna would only play in a red light; for she declared that a blue one did not suit her complexion. It was like a company of flies in a bottle; and I was in the bottle with them, for I was the director. My breath stopped and my head whirled round; I was as miserable as a man can be. It was quite a novel kind of men among whom I now found myself. I only wished I had them all in the box again, and that I had never been a director at all; so I told them roundly that after all they were nothing but puppets; and then they killed me. I found myself lying on my bed in my room; and how I got there, and how I got away at all from the Polytechnic candidate, he may perhaps know, for I don't. The moon shone upon the floor where the box lay open, and the dolls all in a confusion together—great and small all scattered about; but I was not idle. Out of bed I jumped, and into the box they had all to go, some on their heads, some on their feet, and I shut down the lid and seated myself upon the box. 'Now you 'll just have to stay there,' said I, 'and I shall beware how I wish you flesh and blood again.' I felt quite light my good humour had come back, and I

was the happiest of mortals. The Polytechnic student had fully purified me. I sat as happy as a king, and went to sleep on the box. The next morning—strictly speaking it was noon, for I slept wonderfully late that day—I was still sitting there, happy and conscious that my former wish had been a foolish one. I inquired for the Polytechnic candidate, but he was gone, like the Greek and Roman gods; and from that time I 've been the happiest of men. I am a happy director: none of my company ever grumble, nor my public either, for they are always merry. I can put my pieces together just as I please. I take out of every comedy what pleases me best, and no one is angry at it. Pieces that are neglected now-a-days by the great public, but which it used to run after thirty years ago, and at which it used to cry till the tears ran down its cheeks, these pieces I now take up; I put them before the little ones, and the little ones cry just as papa and mamma used to cry thirty years ago; but I shorten them, for the youngsters don't like a long palaver; what they want is something mournful, but quick."

THE PIGS.

Charles Dickens once told us about a pig, and since that time we are in a good humour if we only hear one grunt. St. Antony took the pig under his protection; and when we think of the prodigal son we always associate with him the idea of feeding swine; and it was in front of a pig-sty that a certain carriage stopped in Sweden, about which I am going to talk. The farmer had his pig-sty built out towards the high road, close by his house, and it was a wonderful pig-sty. It was an old state carriage. The seats had been taken out and the wheels taken off, and so the body of the old coach lay on the ground, and four pigs were shut up inside it. I wonder if these were the first that had ever been there? That point could not certainly be determined; but that it had been a real state coach everything bore witness, even to the damask rag that hung down from the roof; everything spoke of better days.

"Humph! humph!" said the occupants, and the coach creaked and groaned; for it had come to a mournful end. "The beautiful has departed," it sighed—or at least it might have done so.

We came back in autumn. The coach was there still, but the pigs were gone. They were playing the grand lords out in the woods.

Blossoms and leaves were gone from all the trees, and storm and rain ruled, and gave them neither peace nor rest; and the birds of passage had flown. "The beautiful has departed! This was the glorious green wood, but the song of the birds and the warm sunshine are gone! gone!" Thus said the mournful voice that creaked in the lofty branches of the trees, and it sounded like a deep-drawn sigh, a sigh from the bosom of

THE PIGS AT HOME IN THE OLD STATE COACH.

the wild rose tree, and of him who sat there; it was the rose king. Do you know him? He is all beard, the finest reddish-green beard; he is easily recognized. Go up to the wild rose bushes, and when in autumn all the flowers have faded from them, and only the wild hips remain, you will often find under them a great red-green moss flower; and that is the rose king. A little green leaf grows up out of his head, and that 's his feather. He is the only man of his kind on the rose bush; and he it was who sighed.

"Gone! gone! The beautiful is gone! The roses have faded, and the leaves fall down! It's wet here! it's boisterous here! The birds who used to sing are dumb, and the pigs go out hunting for acorns, and the pigs are the lords of the forest!"

The nights were cold and the days were misty; but, for all that, the raven sat on the branch and sang, "Good! good!" Raven and crow sat on the high bough; and they had a large family, who all said, "Good! good!" and the majority is always right.

Under the high trees, in the hollow, was a great puddle, and here the pigs reclined, great and small. They found the place so inexpressibly lovely! "Oui! oui!" they all exclaimed. That was all the French they knew, but even that was something; and they were so clever and so fat!

The old ones lay quite still, and reflected; the young ones were very busy, and were not quiet a moment. One little porker had a twist in his tail like a ring, and this ring was his mothers's pride: she thought all the rest were looking at the ring, and thinking only of the ring; but that they were not doing; they were thinking of themselves and of what was useful, and what was the use of the wood. They had always heard that the acorns they ate grew at the roots of the trees, and accordingly they had grubbed up the ground; but there came quite a little pig—it's always the young ones who come out with their new-fangled notions—who declared that the acorns fell down from the branches, for one had just fallen down on his head, and the idea had struck him at once, afterwards he had made observations, and now was quite certain on the point. The old ones put their heads together. "Umph!" they said, "umph! The glory has departed: the twittering of the birds is all over: we want fruit; whatever's good to eat is good, and we eat everything."

"Oui! oui!" chimed in all the rest.

But the mother now looked at her little porker, the one with the ring in his tail. "One must not overlook the beautiful," she said. "Good! good!" cried the crow, and flew down from the tree to try and get an appointment as nightingale; for some one must be appointed; and the crow obtained the office directly.

"Gone! gone!" sighed the rose king. "All the beautiful is gone!"

It was boisterous, it was grey, cold, and windy; and through the forest and over the field swept the rain in long dark streaks. Where is the bird who sang, where are the flowers upon the meadow, and the sweet berries of the wood? Gone! gone!

Then a light gleamed from the forester's house. It was lit up like a star, and threw its long ray among the trees. A song sounded forth

out of the house! Beautiful children played there round the old grandfather. He sat with the Bible on his knee, and read of the Creator and of a better world, and spoke of spring that would return, of the forest that would array itself in fresh green, of the roses that would bloom, the nightingale that would sing, and of the beautiful that would reign in its glory again.

But the rose king heard it not, for he sat in the cold, damp weather, and sighed, "Gone! gone!" And the pigs were the lords of the forest, and the old mother sow looked proudly at her little porker with the twist in his tail. "There is always somebody who has a soul for the beautiful!" she said.

ANNE LISBETH.

ANNE LISBETH had a colour like milk and blood; young, fresh, and merry, she looked beautiful, with gleaming white teeth and clear eyes; her footstep was light in the dance, and her mind was lighter still. And what came of it all? Her son was an ugly brat! Yes, he was not pretty; so he was put out to be nursed by the labourer's wife. Anne Lisbeth was taken into the count's castle, and sat there in the splendid room arrayed in silks and velvets; not a breath of wind might blow upon her, and no one was allowed to speak a harsh word to her. No, that might not be; for she was nurse to the count's child, which was delicate and fair as a prince, and beautiful as an angel; and how she loved this child! Her own boy was provided for at the labourer's, where the mouth boiled over more frequently than the pot, and where, in general, no one was at home to take care of the child. Then he would cry; but what nobody knows, that nobody cares for, and he would cry till he was tired, and then he fell asleep; and in sleep one feels neither hunger nor thirst. A capital invention is sleep.

With years, just as weeds shoot up, Anne Lisbeth's child grew, but yet they said his growth was stunted; but he had quite become a member of the family in which he dwelt; they had received money to keep him. Anne Lisbeth was rid of him for good. She had become a town lady, and had a comfortable home of her own; and out of doors she wore a bonnet, when she went out for a walk; but she never walked out to see the labourer—that was too far from the town; and indeed she had nothing to go for; the boy belonged to the labouring people, and she said

he could eat his food, and he should do something to earn his food, and consequently he kept Matz's red cow. He could already tend cattle and make himself useful.

The big dog, by the yard gate of the nobleman's mansion, sits proudly in the sunshine on the top of the kennel, and barks at every one who goes by: if it rains he creeps into his house, and there he is warm and dry. Ann Lisbeth's boy sat in the sunshine on the fence of the field, and cut out a pole-pin. In the spring he knew of three strawberry plants that were in blossom, and would certainly bear fruit, and that was his most hopeful thought; but they came to nothing. He sat out in the rain in foul weather, and was wet to the skin, and afterwards the cold wind dried the clothes on his back. When he came to the lordly farmyard he was hustled and cuffed, for the men and maids declared he was horribly ugly; but he was used to that—loved by nobody!

That was how it went with Anne Lisbeth's boy; and how could it go otherwise? It was, once for all, his fate to be beloved by nobody.

Till now a "land crab," the land at last threw him overboard. He went to sea in a wretched vessel, and sat by the helm, while the skipper sat over the grog-can. He was dirty and ugly, half frozen and half starved: one would have thought he had never had enough; and that really was the case.

It was late in autumn, rough, wet, windy weather; the wind cut cold through the thickest clothing, especially at sea; and out to sea went a wretched boat, with only two men on board, or, properly speaking, with only a man and a half, the skipper and his boy. It had only been a kind of twilight all day, and now it became dark; and it was bitter cold. The skipper drank a dram, which was to warm him from within. The bottle was old, and the glass too; it was whole at the top, but the foot was broken off, and therefore it stood upon a little carved block of wood painted blue. "A dram comforts one, and two are better still," thought the skipper. The boy sat at the helm, which he held fast in his hard seamed hands: he was ugly, and his hair was matted, and he looked crippled and stunted; he was the field labourer's boy, though in the church register he was entered as Anne Lisbeth's son.

The wind cut its way through the rigging, and the boat cut through the sea. The sail blew out, filled by the wind, and they drove on in wild career. It was rough and wet around and above, and it might come worse still. Hold! what was that? what struck there? what burst yonder? what seized the boat? It heeled, and lay on its beam ends! Was it a waterspout? Was it a heavy sea coming suddenly down? The boy at the helm cried out aloud, "Heaven help us!" The

boat had struck on a great rock standing up from the depths of the sea, and it sank like an old shoe in a puddle; it sank "with man and mouse," as the saying is; and there were mice on board, but only one man and a half, the skipper and the labourer's boy. No one saw it but the swimming seagulls, and the fishes down yonder, and even they did not see it rightly, for they started back in terror when the water rushed into the ship, and it sank. There it lay scarce a fathom below the surface, and those two were provided for, buried and forgotten! Only the glass with the foot of blue wood did not sink; for the wood kept it up; the glass drifted away, to be broken and cast upon the shore—where and when? But, indeed, that is of no consequence. It had served its time, and it had been loved, which Anne Lisbeth's boy had not been. But in heaven no soul will be able to say, "Never loved!"

Anne Lisbeth had lived in the city for many years. She was called Madame, and felt her dignity, when she remembered the old "noble" days in which she had driven in the carriage, and had associated with countesses and baronesses. Her beautiful noble-child was the dearest angel, the kindest heart; he had loved her so much, and she had loved him in return; they had kissed and loved each other, and the boy had been her joy, her second life. Now he was so tall, and was fourteen years old, handsome and clever: she had not seen him since she carried him in her arms; for many years she had not been in the count's palace, for indeed it was quite a journey thither.

"I must once make an effort and go," said Anne Lisbeth. "I must go to my darling, to my sweet count's child. Yes, he certainly must long to see me too, the young count; he thinks of me and loves me as in those days when he flung his angel arms round my neck and cried 'Anne Liz.!' It sounded like music. Yes, I must make an effort and see him again."

She drove across the country in a grazier's cart, and then got out and continued her journey on foot, and thus reached the count's castle. It was great and magnificent as it had always been, and the garden looked the same as ever; but all the people there were strangers to her; not one of them knew Anne Lisbeth, and they did not know of what consequence she had once been there, but she felt sure the countess would let them know it, and her darling boy too. How she longed to see him!

Now, Anne Lisbeth was at her journey's end. She was kept waiting a considerable time, and for those who wait time passes slowly. But before the great people went to table she was called in and accosted very graciously. She was to see her sweet boy after dinner, and then she was to be called in again.

How tall and slender and thin he had grown! But he had still his beautiful eyes, and the angel-sweet mouth! He looked at her, but he said not a word: certainly he did not know her. He turned round, and was about to go away, but she seized his hand and pressed it to her mouth. "Good, good!" said he; and with that he went out of the room—he who filled her every thought—he whom she had loved best, and

ANNE LISBETH'S BOY.

who was her whole earthly pride. Anne Lisbeth went out of the castle into the open highway, and she felt very mournful; he had been so cold and strange to her, had not a word nor a thought for her, he whom she had once carried day and night, and whom she still carried in her dreams.

A great black raven shot down in front of her on to the high road, and croaked and croaked again. "Ha!" she said, "what bird of ill omen art thou?"

She came past the hut of the labourer; the wife stood at the door, and the two women spoke to one another.

"You look well," said the woman. "You are plump and fat; you're well off."

"Oh, yes," answered Anne Lisbeth.

"The boat went down with them," continued the woman. "Hans skipper and the boy were both drowned. There's an end of them. I always thought the boy would be able to help me out with a few dollars. He'll never cost *you* anything more, Anne Lisbeth."

"So they were drowned?" Anne Lisbeth repeated; and then nothing more was said on the subject.

Anne Lisbeth was very low-spirited because her count-child had shown no disposition to talk with her who loved him so well, and who had journeyed all that way to get a sight of him; and the journey had cost money too, though the pleasure she had derived from it was not great. Still she said not a word about this. She would not relieve her heart by telling the labourer's wife about it, lest the latter should think she did not enjoy her former position at the castle. Then the raven screamed again, and flew past over her once more.

"The black wretch!" said Anne Lisbeth; "he 'll end by frightening me to-day."

She had brought coffee and chicory with her, for she thought it would be a charity towards the poor woman to give them to her to boil a cup of coffee, and then she herself would take a cup too. The woman prepared the coffee, and in the meantime Anne Lisbeth sat down upon a chair and fell asleep. There she dreamed of something she had never dreamed before; singularly enough, she dreamed of her own child that had wept and hungered there in the labourer's hut, had been hustled about in heat and in cold, and was now lying in the depths of the sea, Heaven knows where. She dreamed she was sitting in the hut, where the woman was busy preparing the coffee—she could smell the roasting coffee beans. But suddenly it seemed to her that there stood on the threshold a beautiful young form, as beautiful as the count's child; and this apparition said to her, "The world is passing away! Hold fast to me, for you are my mother after all. You have an angel in heaven. Hold me fast!" And the child-angel stretched out its hand to her; and there was a terrible crash, for the world was going to pieces, and the angel was raising himself above the earth, and holding her by the sleeve so tightly, it seemed to her, that she was lifted up from the ground; but, on the other hand, something heavy hung at her feet and dragged her down, and it seemed to her that hundreds of women clung to her, and

cried, "If thou art to be saved, we must be saved too! Hold fast, hold fast!" And then they all hung on to her; but there were too many of them, and—*ritsch, ratsch!*—the sleeve tore, and Anne Lisbeth fell down in horror—and awoke. And indeed she was on the point of falling over, with the chair on which she sat; she was so startled and alarmed that she could not recollect what it was she had dreamed, but she remembered that it had been something dreadful.

ANNE LISBETH AT THE LABOURER'S COTTAGE.

The coffee was taken, and they had a chat together; and then Anne Lisbeth went away towards the little town where she was to meet the carrier, and to drive back with him to her own home. But when she came to speak to him, he said he should not be ready to start before the evening of the next day. She began to think about the expense and the length of the way, and when she considered that the route by the sea shore was shorter by two miles than the other, and that the weather

was clear and the moon shone, she determined to make her way on foot, and to start at once, that she might be at home by next day.

The sun had set, and the evening bells, tolled in the towers of the village churches, still sounded through the air; but no, it was not the bells, but the cry of the frogs in the marshes. Now they were silent, and all around was still; not a bird was heard, for they were all gone to rest; and even the owl seemed to be at home; deep silence reigned on the margin of the forest and by the sea shore: as Anne Lisbeth walked on she could hear her own footsteps on the sand; there was no sound of waves in the sea; everything out in the deep waters had sunk to silence. All was quiet there, the living and the dead creatures of the sea.

Anne Lisbeth walked on "thinking of nothing at all," as the saying *is*, or rather, her thoughts wandered; but thoughts had not wandered away from her, for they are never absent from us, they only slumber. But those that have not yet stirred come forth at their time, and begin to stir sometimes in the heart and sometimes in the head, and seem to come upon us as if from above.

It is written that a good deed bears its fruit of blessing, and it is also written that sin is death. Much has been written and much has been said which one does not know or think of in general; and thus it was with Anne Lisbeth. But it may happen that a light arises within one, and that the forgotten things may approach.

All virtues and all vices lie in our hearts. They are in mine and in thine; they lie there like little grains of seed; and then from without comes a ray of sunshine or the touch of an evil hand, or maybe you turn the corner and go to the right or to the left, and that may be decisive; for the little seed-corn perhaps is stirred, and it swells and shoots up, and it bursts, and pours its sap into all your blood, and then your career has commenced. There are tormenting thoughts, which one does not feel when one walks on with slumbering senses, but they are there, fermenting in the heart. Anne Lisbeth walked on thus with her senses half in slumber, but the thoughts were fermenting within her. From one Shrove Tuesday to the next there comes much that weighs upon the heart—the reckoning of a whole year: much is forgotten, sins against Heaven in word and in thought, against our neighbour, and against our own conscience. We don't think of these things, and Anne Lisbeth did not think of them. She had committed no crime against the law of the land, she was very respectable, an honoured and well-placed person, that she knew. And as she walked along by the margin of the sea, what was it she saw lying there? An old hat, a man's hat. Now, where might that have been washed overboard? She came nearer, and stopped

to look at the hat. Ha! what was lying yonder? She shuddered; but it was nothing save a heap of sea grass and tangle flung across a long stone; but it looked just like a corpse: it was only sea grass and tangle, and yet she was frightened at it, and as she turned away to walk on much came into her mind that she had heard in her childhood; old superstitions of spectres by the sea shore, of the ghosts of drowned but unburied people whose corpses have been washed up on to the desert shore. The body, she had heard, could do harm to none, but the spirit could pursue the lonely wanderer, and attach itself to him, and demand to be carried to the churchyard that it might rest in consecrated ground. "Hold fast! hold fast!" the spectre would then cry; and while Anne Lisbeth murmured the words to herself, her whole dream suddenly stood before her just as she had dreamed it, when the mothers clung to her and had repeated this word, amid the crash of the world, when her sleeve was torn and she slipped out of the grasp of her child, who wanted to hold her up in that terrible hour. Her child, her own child, which she had never loved, lay now buried in the sea, and might rise up like a spectre from the waters, and cry "Hold fast! carry me to consecrated earth." And as these thoughts passed through her mind, fear gave speed to her feet, so that she walked on faster and faster; fear came upon her like the touch of a cold wet hand that was laid upon her heart, so that she almost fainted; and as she looked out across the sea, all there grew darker and darker; a heavy mist came rolling onward, and clung round bush and tree, twisting them into fantastic shapes. She turned round, and glanced up at the moon, which had risen behind her. It looked like a pale, rayless surface; and a deadly weight appeared to cling to her limbs. "Hold fast!" thought she; and when she turned round a second time and looked at the moon, its white face seemed quite close to her, and the mist hung like a pale garment from her shoulders. "Hold fast! carry me to consecrated earth!" sounded in her ears in strange hollow tones. The sound did not come from frogs or ravens; she saw no sign of any such creatures. "A grave, dig me a grave!" was repeated quite loud. Yes, it was the spectre of her child, the child that lay in the ocean, and whose spirit could have no rest until it was carried to the churchyard, and until a grave had been dug for it in consecrated ground. Thither she would go, and there she would dig; and she went on in the direction of the church, and the weight on her heart seemed to grow lighter, and even to vanish altogether; but when she turned to go home by the shortest way, it returned. "Hold fast! hold fast!" and the words came quite clear, though they were like the croak of a frog or the wail of a bird, "A grave! dig me a grave!"

The mist was cold and damp; her hands and face were cold and damp with horror; a heavy weight again seized her and clung to her, and in her mind a great space opened for thoughts that had never before been there.

Here in the North the beech wood often buds in a single night, and in the morning sunlight it appears in its full glory of youthful green; and thus in a single instant can the consciousness unfold itself of the sin that has been contained in the thoughts, words, and works of our past life. It springs up and unfolds itself in a single second when once the conscience is awakened; and God wakens it when we least expect it. Then we find no excuse for ourselves—the deed is there, and bears witness against us; the thoughts seem to become words, and to sound far out into the world. We are horrified at the thought of what we have carried within us, and have not stifled over what we have sown in our thoughtlessness and pride. The heart hides within itself all the virtues and likewise all the vices, and they grow even in the shallowest ground.

Anne Lisbeth now experienced all the thoughts we have clothed in words. She was overpowered by them, and sank down, and crept along for some distance on the ground. "A grave! dig me a grave!" it sounded again in her ears; and she would gladly have buried herself if in the grave there had been forgetfulness of every deed. It was the first hour of her awakening; full of anguish and horror. Superstition alternately made her shudder with cold and made her blood burn with the heat of fever. Many things of which she had never liked to speak came into her mind. Silent as the cloud shadows in the bright moonshine, a spectral apparition flitted by her: she had heard of it before. Close by her gallopped four snorting steeds, with fire spurting from their eyes and nostrils; they dragged a red-hot coach, and within it sat the wicked proprietor who had ruled here a hundred years ago. The legend said that every night at twelve o'clock he drove into his castle yard and out again. There! there! He was not pale as dead men are said to be, but black as a coal. He nodded at Anne Lisbeth and beckoned to her. "Hold fast! hold fast! then you may ride again in a nobleman's carriage, and forget your child!"

She gathered herself up, and hastened to the churchyard; but the black crosses and the black ravens danced before her eyes, and she could not distinguish one from the other. The ravens croaked, as the raven had done that she saw in the daytime, but now she understood what they said. "I am the raven-mother! I am the raven-mother!" each raven croaked, and Anne Lisbeth now understood that the name also

ANNE LISBETH FOUND ON THE SEA SHORE.

applied to her; and she fancied she should be transformed into a black bird, and be obliged to cry what they cried if she did not dig the grave.

And she threw herself on the earth, and with her hands dug a grave in the hard ground, so that the blood ran from her fingers.

"A grave! dig me a grave!" it still sounded; she was fearful that the cock might crow, and the first red streak appear in the east, before she had finished her work, and then she would be lost.

And the cock crowed, and day dawned in the east, and the grave was only half dug. An icy hand passed over her head and face, and down towards her heart. "Only half a grave!" a voice wailed, and fled away. Yes, it fled away over the sea—it was the ocean spectre; and exhausted and overpowered, Anne Lisbeth sunk to the ground, and her senses forsook her.

It was bright day when she came to herself, and two men were raising her up; but she was not lying in the churchyard, but on the sea shore, where she had dug a deep hole in the sand, and cut her hand against a broken glass, whose sharp stem was stuck in a little painted block of wood. Anne Lisbeth was in a fever. Conscience had shuffled the cards of superstition, and had laid out these cards, and she fancied she had only half a soul, and that her child had taken the other half down into the sea. Never would she be able to swing herself aloft to the mercy of Heaven, till she had recovered this other half, which was now held fast in the deep water. Anne Lisbeth got back to her former home, but was no longer the woman she had been: her thoughts were confused like a tangled skein; only one thread, only one thought she had disentangled, namely, that she must carry the spectre of the sea shore to the churchyard, and dig a grave for him, that thus she might win back her soul.

Many a night she was missed from her home; and she was always found on the sea shore, waiting for the spectre. In this way a whole year passed by; and then one night she vanished again, and was not to be found; the whole of the next day was wasted in fruitless search.

Towards evening, when the clerk came into the church to toll the vesper bell, he saw by the altar Anne Lisbeth, who had spent the whole day there. Her physical forces were almost exhausted, but her eyes gleamed brightly, and her cheeks had a rosy flush. The last rays of the sun shone upon her, and gleamed over the altar on the bright buckles of the Bible which lay there, opened at the words of the prophet Joel: "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord!" That was just a chance, the people said; as many things happen by chance.

In the face of Anne Lisbeth, illumined by the sun, peace and rest were to be seen. She said she was happy, for now she had conquered. Last night the spectre of the shore, her own child, had come to her, and had said to her, "Thou hast dug me only half a grave, but thou hast now, for a year and a day, buried me altogether in thy heart, and it is there that a mother can best hide her child!" And then he gave her her lost soul back again, and brought her here into the church.

"Now I am in the house of God," she said, "and in that house we are happy."

And when the sun had set, Anne Lisbeth's soul had risen to that region where there is no more anguish, and Anne Lisbeth's troubles were over.

CHARMING.

ALFRED the sculptor—you know him? We all know him: he won the great gold medal, and got a travelling scholarship, went to Italy, and then came back to his native land. He was young in those days, and indeed he is young yet, though he is ten years older than he was then.

After his return he visited one of the little provincial towns on the island of Seeland. The whole town knew who the stranger was, and one of the richest persons gave a party in honour of him, and all who were of any consequence, or possessed any property, were invited. It was quite an event, and all the town knew of it without its being announced by beat of drum. Apprentice boys, and children of poor people, and even some of the poor people themselves, stood in front of the house, and looked at the lighted curtain; and the watchman could fancy that *he* was giving a party, so many people were in the streets. There was quite an air of festivity about, and in the house was festivity also, for Mr. Alfred the sculptor was there.

He talked, and told anecdotes, and all listened to him with pleasure and a certain kind of awe; but none felt such respect for him as did the elderly widow of an official: she seemed, so far as Mr. Alfred was concerned, like a fresh piece of blotting paper, that absorbed all that was spoken, and asked for more. She was very appreciative, and incredibly ignorant—a kind of female Caspar Hauser.

"I should like to see Rome," she said. "It must be a lovely city, with all the strangers who are continually arriving there. Now, do give us a description of Rome. How does the city look when you come in by the gate?"

"I cannot very well describe it," replied the sculptor. "A great open place, and in the midst of it an obelisk, which is a thousand years old."

"An organist!" exclaimed the lady, who had never met with the word *obelisk*. A few of the guests could hardly keep from laughing, nor could the sculptor quite keep his countenance; but the smile that rose to his lips faded away, for he saw, close by the inquisitive dame, a pair of dark blue eyes—they belonged to the daughter of the speaker, and any one who has such a daughter cannot be silly! The mother was like a fountain of questions, and the daughter, who listened, but never spoke, might pass for the beautiful Naiad of the fountain. How charming she was! She was a study for the sculptor to contemplate, but not to converse with; and, indeed, she did not speak, or only very seldom.

"Has the Pope a large family?" asked the lady.

And the young man considerately answered, as if the question had been better put, "No, he does not come of a great family."

"That 's not what I mean," the widow persisted. "I mean, has he a wife and children?"

"The Pope is not allowed to marry," said the gentleman.

"I don't like that," was the lady's comment.

She certainly might have put more sensible questions; but if she had not spoken in just the manner she used, would her daughter have leant so gracefully on her shoulder, looking straight out with the almost mournful smile upon her face?

Then Mr. Alfred spoke again, and told of the glory of colour in Italy, of the purple hills, the blue Mediterranean, the azure sky of the South, whose brightness and glory was only surpassed in the North by a maiden's deep blue eyes. And this he said with a peculiar application; but she, who should have understood his meaning, looked as if she were quite unconscious of it, and that again was charming!

"Italy!" sighed a few of the guests. "Oh, to travel!" sighed others. "Charming, charming!" chorused they all.

"Yes, if I win a hundred thousand dollars in the lottery," said the head tax-collector's lady, "then we will travel. I and my daughter, and you, Mr. Alfred; you must be our guide. We 'll all three travel together, and one or two good friends more." And she nodded in such a friendly way at the company, that each one might imagine he or she was the person who was to be taken to Italy. "Yes, we will go to Italy! but not to those parts where there are robbers—we 'll keep to Rome, and to the great high roads where one is safe."

And the daughter sighed very quietly. And how much may lie in one little sigh, or be placed in it! The young man placed a great deal in it. The two blue eyes, lit up that evening in honour of him, must

conceal treasures—treasures of the heart and mind—richer than all the glories of Rome; and when he left the party that night he had lost *his* heart—lost it completely, to the young lady.

The house of the head tax-collector's widow was the one which Mr. Alfred the sculptor most assiduously frequented; and it was understood that his visits were not intended for that lady, though he and she were the people who kept up the conversation; he came for the daughter's sake. They called her Kala. Her name was really Calen Malena, and these two names had been contracted into the one name, Kala. She was beautiful; but a few said she was rather dull, and probably slept late of a morning.

"She has been always accustomed to that," her mother said. "She 's a beauty, and they always are easily tired. She sleeps rather late, but that makes her eyes so clear."

What a power lay in the depths of these dark blue eyes! "Still waters run deep." The young man felt the truth of this proverb; and his heart had sunk into the depths. He spoke and told his adventures, and the mamma was as simple and eager in her questioning as on the first evening of their meeting.

It was a pleasure to hear Alfred describe anything. He spoke of Naples, of excursions to Mount Vesuvius, and showed coloured prints of several of the eruptions. And the head tax-collector's widow had never heard of them before, or taken time to consider the question.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "So that is a burning mountain! But is it not dangerous to the people round about?"

"Whole cities have been destroyed," he answered; "for instance, Pompeii and Herculaneum."

"But the poor people!—And you saw all that with your own eyes?"

"No, I did not see any of the eruptions represented in these pictures, but I will show you a picture of my own, of an eruption I saw."

He laid a pencil sketch upon the table, and mamma, who had been absorbed in the contemplation of the highly coloured prints, threw a glance at the pale drawing, and cried in astonishment,

"Did you see it throw up white fire?"

For a moment Alfred's respect for Kala's mamma suffered a sudden diminution; but, dazzled by the light that illumined Kala, he soon found it quite natural that the old lady should have no eye for colour. After all, it was of no consequence, for Kala's mamma had the best of all things—namely, Kala herself.

And Alfred and Kala were betrothed, which was natural enough, and the betrothal was announced in the little newspaper of the town.

Mamma purchased thirty copies of the paper, that she might cut out the paragraph and send it to friends and acquaintances. And the betrothed pair were happy, and the mother-in-law elect was happy too; for it seemed like connecting herself with Thorwaldsen.

"For you are a continuation of Thorwaldsen," she said to Alfred. And it seemed to Alfred that mamma had in this instance said a clever thing. Kala said nothing; but her eyes shone, her lips smiled, her every movement was graceful: yes, she was beautiful; that cannot be too often repeated.

Alfred undertook to take a bust of Kala and of his mother-in-law. They sat to him accordingly, and saw how he moulded and smoothed the soft clay with his fingers.

"I suppose it 's only on our account," said mamma-in-law, "that you undertake this commonplace work, and don't leave your servant to do all that sticking together."

"It is highly necessary that I should mould the clay myself," he replied.

"Ah, yes, you are so very polite," retorted mamma; and Kala silently pressed his hand, still soiled by the clay.

And he unfolded to both of them the loveliness of nature in creation, pointing out how the living stood higher in the scale than the dead creature, how the plant was developed beyond the mineral, the animal beyond the plant, and man beyond the animal. He strove to show them how mind and beauty become manifest in outward form, and how it was the sculptor's task to seize that beauty and to manifest it in his works.

Kala stood silent, and nodded approbation of the expressed thought, while mamma-in-law made the following confession:

"It 's difficult to follow all that. But I manage to hobble after you with my thoughts, though they whirl round and round, but I contrive to hold them fast."

And Kala's beauty held Alfred fast, filled his soul, and seized and mastered him. Beauty gleamed forth from Kala's every feature—gleamed from her eyes, lurked in the corners of her mouth, and in every movement of her fingers. Alfred the sculptor saw this: he spoke only of her, thought only of her, and the two became one; and thus it may be said that she spoke much, for he and she were one, and he was always talking of her.

Such was the betrothal; and now came the wedding, with bridesmaids and wedding presents, all duly mentioned in the wedding speech.

Mamma-in-law had set up Thorwaldsen's bust at the end of the

KALA'S BUST.

table, attired in a dressing-gown, for he was to be a guest; such was her whim. Songs were sung and cheers were given, for it was a gay wedding, and they were a handsome pair. "Pygmalion received his Galatea," so one of the songs said.

"Ah, that's your mythologics," said mamma-in-law.

Next day the youthful pair started for Copenhagen, where they were to live. Mamma-in-law accompanied them, "to take care of the com-

monplace," as she said, meaning the domestic economy. Kala was like a doll in a doll's house, all was so bright, so new, and so fine. There they sat, all three; and as for Alfred, to use a proverb that will describe his position, we may say that he sat like the friar in the goose-yard.

The magic of form had enchanted him. He had looked at the case, and cared not to inquire what the case contained, and that omission brings unhappiness, much unhappiness, into married life; for the case may be broken, and the gilt may come off; and then the purchaser may repent his bargain. In a large party is is very disagreeable to observe that one's buttons are giving way, and that there are no buckles to fall back upon; but it is worse still in a great company to become aware that wife and mother-in-law are talking nonsense, and that one cannot depend upon oneself for a happy piece of wit to carry off the stupidity of the thing.

The young married pair often sat hand in hand, he speaking and she letting fall a word here and there—the same melody, the same clear, bell-like sounds. It was a mental relief when Sophy, one of her friends, came to pay a visit.

Sophy was not pretty. She was certainly free from bodily deformity, though Kala always asserted she was a little crooked; but no eye save a friend's would have remarked it. She was a very sensible girl, and it never occurred to her that she might become at all dangerous here. Her appearance was like a pleasant breath of air in the doll's house; and air was certainly required here, as they all acknowledged. They felt they wanted airing, and consequently they came out into the air, and mamma-in-law and the young couple travelled to Italy.

"Thank Heaven that we are in our own four walls again," was the exclamation of mother and daughter when they came home, a year after.

"There's no pleasure in travelling," said mamma-in-law. "To tell the truth, it's very wearisome—I beg pardon for saying so. I found the time hang heavy, though I had my children with me; and it's expensive work, travelling, very expensive! And all those galleries one has to see, and the quantity of things you are obliged to run after! You must do it for decency's sake, for you're sure to be asked when you come back; and then you're sure to be told that you've omitted to see what was best worth seeing. I got tired at last of those endless Madonnas; one seemed to be turning a Madonna oneself!"

"And what bad living you get!" said Kala.

"Yes," replied mamma, "no such thing as an honest meat soup. It's miserable trash, their cookery."

And the travelling fatigued Kala: she was always fatigued, that was the worst of it. Sophy was taken into the house, where her presence was a real advantage.

Mamma-in-law acknowledged that Sophy understood both housewifery and art, though a knowledge of the latter could not be expected from a person of her limited means; and she was, moreover, an honest, faithful girl; she showed that thoroughly while Kala lay sick—fading away.

Where the case is everything, the case should be strong, or else all is over. And all *was* over with the case—Kala died.

"She was beautiful," said mamma, "she was quite different from the antiques, for they are so damaged. A beauty ought to be perfect, and Kala was a perfect beauty."

Alfred wept, and mamma wept, and both of them wore mourning. The black dress suited mamma very well, and she wore mourning the longest. Moreover, she had to experience another grief in seeing Alfred marry again—marry Sophy, who had no appearance at all.

"He 's gone to the very extreme," cried mamma-in-law; "he has gone from the most beautiful to the ugliest, and he has forgotten his first wife. Men have no endurance. My husband was of a different stamp, and he died before me."

"Pygmalion received his Galatea," said Alfred: "yes, that 's what they said in the wedding song. I had once really fallen in love with the beautiful statue, which awoke to life in my arms; but the kindred soul which Heaven sends down to us, the angel who can feel and sympathise with and elevate us, I have not found and won till now. You came, Sophy, not in the glory of outward beauty, though you are fair, fairer than is needful. The chief thing remains the chief. You came to teach the sculptor that his work is but clay and dust, only an outward form in a fabric that passes away, and that we must seek the essence, the internal spirit. Poor Kala! ours was but wayfarers' life. Yonder, where we shall know each other by sympathy, we shall be half strangers."

"That was not lovingly spoken," said Sophy, "not spoken like a Christian. Yonder, where there is no giving in marrraige, but where, as you say, souls attract each other by sympathy; there where everything beautiful developes itself and is elevated, her soul may acquire such completeness that it may sound more harmoniously than mine; and you will then once more utter the first raptured exclamation of your love, "Beautiful—most beautiful!"

IN THE DUCK-YARD.

A DUCK arrived from Portugal. Some said she came from Spain, but that 's all the same. At any rate she was called the Portuguese, and laid eggs, and was killed and cooked, and that was *her* career. But the ducklings which crept forth from her eggs were afterwards also called Portuguese, and there is something in that. Now, of the whole family there was only one left in the duck-yard, a yard to which the chickens had access likewise, and where the cock strutted about in a very aggressive manner.

"He annoys me with his loud crowing!" observed the Portuguese duck. "But he's a handsome bird, there's no denying that, though he is not a drake. He ought to moderate his voice, but that 's an art inseparable from polite education, like that possessed by the little singing birds over in the lime trees in the neighbour's garden. How charmingly they sing! There 's something quite pretty in their warbling. I call it Portugal. If I had only such a little singing bird, I 'd be a mother to him, kind and good, for that 's in my blood, my Portuguese blood!"

And while she was still speaking, a little singing bird came head over heels from the roof into the yard. The cat was behind him, but the bird escaped with a broken wing, and that 's how he came tumbling into the yard.

"That 's just like the cat; she 's a villain!" said the Poruguese duck. "I remember her ways when I had children of my own. That such a creature should be allowed to live, and to wander about upon the roofs! I don't think they do such things in Portugal!"

And she pitied the little singing bird, and the other ducks who were not of Portuguese descent pitied him too.

"Poor little creature!" they said, as one after another came up. "We certainly can't sing," they said, "but we have a sounding board, or something of the kind, within us; we can feel that, though we don't talk of it."

"But I can talk of it," said the Portuguese duck; "and I'll do something for the little fellow, for that 's my duty!" And she stepped into the water-trough, and beat her wings upon the water so heartily, that the little singing bird was almost drowned by the bath she got, but the duck meant it kindly. "That 's a good deed," she said: "the others may take example by it."

"Piep!" said the little bird; one of his wings was broken, and he found it difficult to shake himself; but he quite understood that the bath was kindly meant. "You are very kind-hearted, madam," he said; but he did not wish for a second bath.

"I have never thought about my heart," continued the Portuguese duck, "but I know this much, that I love all my fellow-creatures except the cat; but nobody can expect me to love her, for she ate up two of my ducklings. But pray make yourself at home, for one can make oneself comfortable. I myself am from a strange country, as you may see from my bearing, and from my feathery dress. My drake is a native of these parts, he's not of my race; but for all that I'm not proud! If any one here in the yard can understand you, I may assert that I am that person."

"She's quite full of Portulak," said a little common duck, who was witty; and all the other common ducks considered the word *Portulak* quite a good joke, for it sounded like Portugal; and they nudged each other and said "Rapp!" It was too witty! And all the other ducks now began to notice the little singing bird.

"The Portuguese has certainly a greater command of language," they said. "For our part, we don't care to fill our beaks with such long words, but our sympathy is just as great. If we don't do anything for you, we march about with you everywhere; and we think that the best thing we can do."

"You have a lovely voice," said one of the oldest. "It must be a great satisfaction to be able to give so much pleasure as you are able to impart. I certainly am no great judge of your song, and consequently I keep my beak shut; and even that is better than talking nonsense to you, as others do."

"Don't plague him so,' interposed the Portuguese duck: "he requires rest and nursing. My little singing bird, do you wish me to prepare another bath for you?"

"Oh no! pray let me be dry!" was the little bird's petition.

"The water-cure is the only remedy for me when I am unwell," quoth the Portuguese. "Amusement is beneficial too! The neighbouring fowls will soon come to pay their visit. There are two Cochin Chinese among them. They wear feathers on their legs, are well educated, and have been brought from afar, consequently they stand higher than the others in my regard."

And the fowls came, and the cock came; to-day he was polite enough to abstain from being rude.

"You are a true singing bird," he said, "and you do as much with

your little voice as can possibly be done with it. But one requires a little more shrillness, that every hearer may hear that one is a male."

The two Chinese stood quite enchanted with the appearance of the singing bird. He looked very much rumpled after his bath, so that he seemed to them to have quite the appearance of a little Cochin China fowl. "He's charming," they cried, and began a conversation with him, speaking in whispers, and using the most aristocratic Chinese dialect.

"We are of your race," they continued. "The ducks, even the Portuguese, are swimming birds, as you cannot fail to have noticed.

THE LITTLE SINGING BIRD RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED PATRONAGE.

You do not know us yet; very few know us, or give themselves the trouble to make our acquaintance—not even any of the fowls, though we are born to occupy a higher grade on the ladder than most of the rest. But that does not disturb us: we quietly pursue our path amid the others, whose principles are certainly not ours; for we look at things on the favourable side, and only speak of what is good, though it is difficult sometimes to find something when nothing exists. Except us two and the cock, there's no one in the whole poultry-yard who is at once talented and polite. It cannot even be said of the inhabitants of the duck-yard. We warn you, little singing bird: don't trust that one yonder with the short tail feathers, for she's cunning. The pied one

there, with the crooked stripes on her wings, is a strife-seeker, and lets nobody have the last word, though she's always in the wrong. The fat duck yonder speaks evil of every one, and that's against our principles: if we have nothing good to tell, we should hold our beaks. The Portuguese is the only one who has any education, and with whom one can associate, but she is passionate, and talks too much about Portugal."

"I wonder what those two Chinese are always whispering to one another about," whispered one duck to her friend. "They annoy me—we have never spoken to them."

Now the drake came up. He thought the little singing bird was a sparrow.

"Well, I don't understand the difference," he said; "and indeed it's all the same thing. He's only a plaything, and if one has them, why, one has them."

"Don't attach any value to what he says," the Portuguese whispered. "He's very respectable in business matters; and with him business takes precedence of everything. But now I shall lie down for a rest. One owes that to oneself, that one may be nice and fat when one is to be embalmed with apples and plums."

And accordingly she lay down in the sun, and winked with one eye; and she lay very comfortably, and she felt very comfortable, and she slept very comfortably.

The little singing bird busied himself with his broken wing. At last he lay down too, and pressed close to his protectress: the sun shone warm and bright, and he had found a very good place.

But the neighbour's fowls were awake. They went about scratching up the earth; and, to tell the truth, they had paid the visit simply and solely to find food for themselves. The Chinese were the first to leave the duck-yard; and the other fowls soon followed them. The witty little duck said of the Portuguese that the old lady was becoming a ducky dotard. At this the other ducks laughed and cackled aloud. "Ducky dotard," they whispered; "that's too witty!" and then they repeated the former joke about Portulak, and declared that it was vastly amusing. And then they lay down.

They had been lying asleep for some time, when suddenly something was thrown into the yard for them to eat. It came down with such a thwack, that the whole company started up from sleep and clapped their wings. The Portuguese awoke too, and threw herself over on the other side, pressing the little singing bird very hard as she did so.

"Piep!" he cried; "you trod very hard upon me, madam."

"Well, why do you lie in my way?" the duck retorted. "You must

not be so touchy. I have nerves of my own, but yet I never called out 'Piep!'"

"Don't be angry," said the little bird · "the 'piep' came out of my beak unawares."

The Portuguese did not listen to him, but began eating as fast as she could, and made a good meal. When this was ended, and she lay down again, the little bird came up, and wanted to be amiable, and sang:

"Tillee-lilly lee,
Of the good spring time,
I'll sing so fine
As far away I flee."

"Now I want to rest after my dinner," said the Portuguese. "You must conform to the rules of the house while you're here. I want to sleep now."

The little singing bird was quite taken aback, for he had meant it kindly. When Madam afterwards awoke, he stood before her again with a little corn that he had found, and laid it at her feet; but as she had not slept well, she was naturally in a very bad humour.

"Give that to a chicken!" she said, "and don't be always standing in my way."

"Why are you angry with me?" replied the little singing bird. "What have I done?"

"Done!" repeated the Portuguese duck: "your mode of expression is not exactly genteel; a fact to which I must call your attention."

"Yesterday it was sunshine here," said the little bird, "but to-day it's cloudy and the air is close."

"You don't know much about the weather, I fancy," retorted the Portuguese. "The day is not done yet. Don't stand there looking so stupid."

"But you are looking at me just as the wicked eyes looked when I fell into the yard yesterday."

"Impertinent creature!" exclaimed the Portuguese duck, "would you compare me with the cat, that beast of prey? There's not a drop of malicious blood in me. I've taken your part, and will teach you good manners."

And so saying, she bit off the singing bird's head, and he lay dead on the ground.

"Now, what's the meaning of this?" she said, "could he not bear even that? Then certainly he was not made for this world. I've been like a mother to him I know that, for I've a good heart."

Then the neighbour's cock stuck his head into the yard, and crowed with steam-engine power.

"You 'll kill me with your crowing!" she cried. "It's all your fault. He 's lost his head, and I am very near losing mine."

"There's not much lying where he fell!" observed the cock.

"Speak of him with respect," retorted the Portuguese duck, "for he had song, manners, and education. He was affectionate and soft, and that's as good in animals, as in your so-called human beings."

And all the ducks came crowding round the little dead singing bird. Ducks have strong passions, whether they feel envy or pity; and as there was nothing here to envy, pity manifested itself, even in the two Chinese.

"We shall never get such a singing bird again; he was almost a Chinese," they whispered, and they wept with a mighty clucking sound, and all the fowls clucked too; but the ducks went about with the redder eyes.

"We've hearts of our own," they said; "nobody can deny that."

"Hearts!" repeated the Portuguese, "yes, that we have, almost as much as in Portugal."

"Let us think of getting something to satisfy our hunger," said the drake, "for that's the most important point. If one of our toys is broken, why, we have plenty more!"

THE GIRL WHO TROD ON THE LOAF.

THE story of the girl who trod on the loaf, to avoid soiling her shoes, and of the misfortunes that befell this girl, is well known. It has been written, and even printed.

The girl's name was Ingé; she was a poor child, but proud and presumptuous; there was a bad foundation in her, as the saying is. When she was quite a little child, it was her delight to catch flies, and tear off their wings, so as to convert them into creeping things. Grown older, she would take cockchafers and beetles, and spit them on pins. Then she pushed a green leaf or a little scrap of paper towards their feet, and the poor creatures seized it, and held it fast, and turned it over and over, struggling to get free from the pin.

"The cockchafer is reading," Ingé would say. "See how he turns the leaf round and round!"

With years she grew worse rather than better; but she was pretty, and that was her misfortune; otherwise she would have been more sharply reproved than she was.

"Your headstrong will requires something strong to break it!" her own mother often said. "As a little child, you used to trample on my apron; but I fear you will one day trample on my heart."

And that is what she really did.

She was sent into the country, into service in the house of rich people, who kept her as their own child, and dressed her in corresponding style. She looked well, and her presumption increased.

When she had been there about a year, her mistress said to her, "You ought once to visit your parents, Ingé."

And Ingé set out to visit her parents, but it was only to show herself in her native place, and that the people there might see how grand she had become; but when she came to the entrance of the village, and the young husbandmen and maids stood there chatting, and her own mother appeared among them, sitting on a stone to rest, and with a faggot of sticks before her that she had picked up in the wood, then Ingé turned back, for she felt ashamed that she, who was so finely dressed, should have for a mother a ragged woman, who picked up wood in the forest. She did not turn back out of pity for her mother's poverty, she was only angry.

And another half-year went by, and her mistress said again, "You ought to go to your home, and visit your old parents, Ingé. I'll make you a present of a great wheaten loaf that you may give to them; they will certainly be glad to see you again."

And Ingé put on her best clothes, and her new shoes, and drew her skirts around her, and set out, stepping very carefully, that she might be clean and neat about the feet; and there was no harm in that. But when she came to the place where the footway led across the moor, and where there was mud and puddles, she threw the loaf into the mud, and trod upon it to pass over without wetting her feet. But as she stood there with one foot upon the loaf and the other uplifted to step farther, the loaf sank with her, deeper and deeper, till she disappeared altogether, and only a great puddle, from which the bubbles rose, remained where she had been.

And that's the story.

But whither did Ingé go? She sank into the moor ground, and went down to the moor woman, who is always brewing there. The moor

INGÉ TURNS BACK AT THE SIGHT OF HER POOR MOTHER.

woman is cousin to the elf maidens, who are well enough known, of whom songs are sung, and whose pictures are painted; but concerning the moor woman it is only known that when the meadows steam in summer-time it is because she is brewing. Into the moor woman's

brewery did Ingé sink down; and no one can endure that place long. A box of mud is a palace compared with the moor woman's brewery. Every barrel there has an odour that almost takes away one's senses; and the barrels stand close to each other; and wherever there is a little opening among them, through which one might push one's way, the passage becomes impracticable from the number of damp toads and fat snakes who sit out their time there. Among this company did Ingé fall; and all the horrible mass of living creeping things was so icy cold, that she shuddered in all her limbs, and became stark and stiff. She continue fastened to the loaf, and the loaf drew her down as an amber button draws a fragment of straw.

The moor woman was at home, and on that day there were visitors in the brewery. These visitors were old Bogey and his grandmother, who came to inspect it; and Bogey's grandmother is a venemous old woman, who is never idle: she never rides out to pay a visit without taking her work with her; and, accordingly, she had brought it on the day in question. She sewed biting-leather to be worked into men's shoes; and which makes them wander about unable to settle anywhere. She wove webs of lies, and strung together hastily-spoken words that had fallen to the ground; and all this was done for the injury and ruin of mankind. Yes, indeed, she knew how to sew, to weave, and to string, this old grandmother!

Catching sight of Ingé, she put up her double eye-glass, and took another look at the girl. "That's a girl who has ability!" she observed, "and I beg you will give me the little one as a memento of my visit here. She'll make a capital statue to stand in my grandson's antechamber."

And Ingé was given up to her, and this is how Ingé came into Bogey's domain. People don't always go there by the direct path, but they can get there by roundabout routes if they have a tendency in that direction.

That was a never-ending antechamber. The visitor became giddy who looked forward, and doubly giddy when he looked back, and saw a whole crowd of people, almost utterly exhausted, waiting till the gate of mercy should be opened to them—they had to wait a long time! Great fat waddling spiders spun webs of a thousand years over their feet, and these webs cut like wire, and bound them like bronze fetters; and, moreover, there was an eternal unrest working in every heart—a miserable unrest. The miser stood there, and had forgotten the key of his strong box, and he knew the key was sticking in the lock. It would take too long to describe the various sorts of torture that were found

there together. Ingé felt a terrible pain while she had to stand there as a statue, for she was tied fast to the loaf.

"That 's the fruit of wishing to keep one's feet neat and tidy," she said to herself. "Just look how they 're all staring at me!" Yes, certainly, the eyes of all were fixed upon her, and their evil thoughts gleamed forth from their eyes, and they spoke to one another, moving their lips, from which no sound whatever came forth: they were very horrible to behold.

"It must be a great pleasure to look at me!" thought Ingé, "and indeed I have a pretty face and fine clothes." And she turned her eyes, for she could not turn her head; her neck was too stiff for that. But she had not considered how her clothes had been soiled in the moor woman's brewhouse. Her garments were covered with mud; a snake had fastened in her hair, and dangled down her back; and out of each fold of her frock a great toad looked forth, croaking like an asthmatic poodle. That was very disconcerting. "But all the rest of them down here look horrible," she observed to herself, and derived consolation from the thought.

The worst of all was the terrible hunger that tormented her. But could she not stoop and break off a piece of the loaf on which she stood? No, her back was too stiff, her hands and arms were benumbed, and her whole body was like a pillar of stone; only she was able to turn her eyes in her head, to turn them quite round so that she could see backwards: it was an ugly sight. And then the flies came up, and crept to and fro over her eyes, and she blinked her eyes, but the flies would not go away, for they could not fly: their wings had been pulled out, so that they were converted into creeping insects: it was horrible torment added to the hunger, for she felt empty, quite, entirely empty. "If this lasts much longer," she said, "I shall not be able to bear it." But she had to bear it, and it lasted on and on.

Then a hot tear fell down upon her head, rolled over her face and neck, down on to the loaf on which she stood; and then another tear rolled down, followed by many more. Who might be weeping for Ingé? Had she not still a mother in the world? The tears of sorrow which a mother weeps for her child always make their way to the child; but they do not relieve it, they only increase its torment. And now to bear this unendurable hunger, and yet not to be able to touch the loaf on which she stood! She felt as if she had been feeding on herself, and had become like a thin, hollow reed that takes in every sound, for she heard everything that was said of her up in the world, and all that she heard was hard and evil. Her mother, indeed, wept much and sorrowed

for her, but for all that she said, "A haughty spirit goes before a fall. That was thy ruin, Ingé. Thou hast sorely grieved thy mother."

Her mother and all on earth knew of the sin she had committed; knew that she had trodden upon the loaf, and had sunk and disappeared; for the cowherd had seen it from the hill beside the moor.

"Greatly hast thou grieved thy mother, Ingé," said the mother; "yes, yes, I thought it would be thus."

"Oh that I never had been born!" thought Ingé; "it would have been far better. But what use is my mother's weeping now?"

And she heard how her master and mistress, who had kept and cherished her like kind parents, now said she was a sinful child, and did not value the gifts of God, but trampled them under her feet, and that the gates of mercy would only open slowly to her.

"They should have punished me," thought Ingé, "and have driven out the whims I had in my head."

She heard how a complete song was made about her, a song of the proud girl who trod upon the loaf to keep her shoes clean, and she heard how the song was sung everywhere.

"That I should have to bear so much evil for this!" thought Ingé; "the others ought to be punished, too, for their sins. Yes, then there would be plenty of punishing to do. Ah, how I'm being tortured!" And her heart became harder than her outward form.

"Here in this company one can't even become better," she said, "and I don't want to become better! Look, how they're all staring at me!"

And her heart was full of anger and malice against all men. "Now they've something to talk about at last up yonder. Ah, how I'm being tortured!"

And then she heard how her story was told to the little children, and the little ones called her the godless Ingé, and said she was so naughty and ugly that she must be well punished.

Thus, even the children's mouths spoke hard words of her.

But one day, while grief and hunger gnawed her hollow frame, and she heard her name mentioned and her story told to an innocent child, a little girl, she became aware that the little one burst into tears at the tale of the haughty, vain Ingé.

"But will Ingé never come up here again?" asked the little girl.

And the reply was, "She will never come up again."

"But if she were to say she was sorry, and to beg pardon, and say she would never do so again?"

"Yes, then she might come; but she will not beg pardon," was the reply.

"I should be *so* glad if she would," said the little girl; and she was quite inconsolable. "I 'll give my doll and all my playthings if she may only come up. It 's too dreadful—poor Ingé!"

And these words penetrated to Ingé's inmost heart, and semed to do her good. It was the first time any one had said, "Poor Ingé," without adding anything about her faults: a little innocent child was weeping and praying for mercy for her. It made her feel quite strangely, and she herself would gladly have wept, but she could not weep, and that was a torment in itself.

While years were passing above her, for where she was there was no change, she heard herself spoken of more and more seldom. At last, one day a sigh struck on her ear: "Ingé, Ingé, how you have grieved me! I said how it would be!" It was the last sigh of her dying mother.

Occasionally she heard her name spoken by her former employers, and they were pleasant words when the woman said, "Shall I ever see thee again, Ingé? One knows not what may happen."

But Ingé knew right well that her good mistress would never come to the place where she was.

And again time went on—a long, bitter time. Then Ingé heard her name pronounced once more, and saw two bright stars that seemed gleaming above her. They were two gentle eyes closing upon earth. So many years had gone by since the little girl had been inconsolable and wept about "poor Ingé," that the child had become an old woman, who was now to be called home to heaven; and in the last hour of existence, when the events of the whole life stand at once before us, the old woman remembered how as a child she had cried heartily at the story of Ingé.

And the eyes of the old woman closed, and the eye of her soul was opened to look upon the hidden things. She, in whose last thoughts Ingé had been present so vividly, saw how deeply the poor girl had sunk, and burst into tears at the sight; in heaven she stood like a child, and wept for poor Ingé. And her tears and prayers sounded like an echo in the dark empty space that surrounded the tormented captive soul, and the unhoped-for love from above conquered her, for an angel was weeping for her. Why was this vouchsafed to her? The tormented soul seemed to gather in her thoughts every deed she had done on earth, and she, Ingé, trembled and wept such tears as she had never yet wept. She was filled with sorrow about herself: it seemed as though the gate of mercy could never open to her; and while in deep penitence she acknowledged this, a beam of light shot radiantly down into the

depths to her, with a greater force than that of the sunbeam which melts the snow man the boys have built up; and quicker than the snow-flake melts, and becomes a drop of water that falls on the warm lips of a child, the stony form of Ingé was changed to mist, and a little bird soared with the speed of lightning upward into the world of men. But the bird was timid and shy towards all things around; he was ashamed of himself, ashamed to encounter any living thing, and hurriedly sought to conceal himself in a dark hole in an old crumbling wall; there he sat cowering, trembling through his whole frame, and unable to utter a sound, for he had no voice. Long he sat there, before he could rightly see all the beauty around him; for it was beautiful. The air was fresh and mild, the moon cast its mild radiance over the earth; trees and bushes exhaled fragrance, and it was right pleasant where he sat, and his coat of feathers was clean and pure. How all creation seemed to speak of beneficence and love! The bird wanted to sing of the thoughts that stirred in his breast, but he could not; gladly would he have sung as the cuckoo and the nightingale sung in spring-time. But Heaven, that hears the mute song of praise of the worm, could hear the notes of praise which now trembled in the breast of the bird, as David's psalms were heard before they had fashioned themselves into words and song.

For weeks these toneless songs stirred within the bird; at last, the holy Christmas-time approached. The peasant who dwelt near set up a pole by the old wall with, some ears of corn bound to the top, that the birds of heaven might have a good meal, and rejoice in the happy, blessed time.

And on Christmas morning the sun arose and shone upon the ears of corn, which were surrounded by a number of twittering birds. Then out of the hole in the wall streamed forth the voice of another bird, and the bird soared forth from its hiding-place; and in heaven it was well known what bird this was.

It was a hard winter. The ponds were covered with ice, and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air were stinted for food. Our little bird soared away over the high road, and in the ruts of the sledges he found here and there a grain of corn, and at the halting-places some crumbs. Of these he ate only a few, but he called all the other hungry sparrows around him, that they, too, might have some food. He flew into the towns, and looked round about; and wherever a kind hand had strewn bread on the window-sill for the birds, he only ate a single crumb himself, and gave all the rest to the other birds.

In the course of the winter, the bird had collected so many bread

crumbs, and given them to the other birds, that they equalled the weight of the loaf on which Ingé had trod to keep her shoes clean; and when the last bread crumb had been found and given, the grey wings of the bird became white, and spread far out.

"Yonder is a sea-swallow, flying away across the water," said the children when they saw the white bird. Now it dived into the sea, and now it rose again into the clear sunlight. It gleamed white; but no one could tell whither it went, though some asserted that it flew straight into the sun.

A STORY FROM THE SAND-DUNES.

This is a story from the sand-dunes or sand-hills of Jutland; though it does not begin in Jutland, the northern peninsula, but far away in the south, in Spain. The ocean is the high road between the nations—transport thyself thither in thought to sunny Spain. There it is warm and beautiful, there the fiery pomegranate blossoms flourish among the dark laurels; from the mountains a cool refreshing wind blows down, upon, and over the orange gardens, over the gorgeous Moorish halls with their golden cupolas and coloured walls: through the streets go children in procession, with candles and with waving flags, and over them, lofty and clear, rises the sky with its gleaming stars. There is a sound of song and of castagnettes, and youths and maidens join in the dance under the blooming acacias, while the mendicant sits upon the hewn marble stone, refreshing himself with the juicy melon, and dreamily enjoying life. The whole is like a glorious dream. And there was a newly married couple who completely gave themselves up to its charm; moreover, they possessed the good things of this life, health and cheerfulness of soul, riches and honour.

"We are as happy as it is possible to be," exclaimed the young couple, from the depths of their hearts They had indeed but one step more to mount in the ladder of happiness, in the hope that God would give them a child; a son like them in form and in spirit.

The happy child would be welcomed with rejoicing, would be tended with all care and love, and enjoy every advantage that wealth and ease possessed by an influential family could give.

And the days went by like a glad festival.

"Life is a gracious gift of Providence, an almost inappreciable gift!" said the young wife, "and yet they tell us that fulness of joy is found only in the future life, for ever and ever. I cannot compass the thought."

"And perhaps the thought arises from the arrogance of men," said the husband. "It seems a great pride to believe that we shall live for ever, that we shall be as gods. Were these not the words of the serpent, the origin of falsehood?"

"Surely you do not doubt the future life?" exclaimed the young wife; and it seemed as if one of the first shadows flitted over the sunny heaven of her thoughts.

"Faith promises it, and the priests tells us so!" replied the man; "but amid all my happiness, I feel that it is arrogance to demand a continued happiness, another life after this. Has not so much been given us in this state of existence, that we ought to be, that we *must* be, contented with it?"

"Yes, it has been given to *us*," said the young wife, "but to how many thousands is not this life one scene of hard trial? How many have been thrown into this world, as if only to suffer poverty and shame and sickness and misfortune? If there were no life after this, everything on earth would be too unequally distributed, and the Almighty would not be justice itself."

"Yonder beggar," replied the man, "has his joys which seem to him great, and which rejoice him as much as the king is rejoiced in the splendour of his palace. And then, do you not think that the beast of burden, which suffers blows and hunger, and works itself to death, suffers from its heavy fate? The dumb beast might likewise demand a future life, and declare the decree unjust that does not admit it into a higher place of creation."

"He has said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions,'" replied the young wife: "heaven is immeasurable, as the love of our Maker is immeasurable. Even the dumb beast is His creature; and I firmly believe that no life will be lost, but that each will receive that amount of happiness which he can enjoy, and which is sufficient for him."

"This world is sufficient for me!" said the man, and he threw his arms round his beautiful, amiable wife, and then smoked his cigarette on the open balcony, where the cool air was filled with the fragrance of oranges and pinks. The sound of music and the clatter of castagnettes came up from the road, the stars gleamed above, and two eyes full of affection, the eyes of his wife, looked on him with the undying glance of love.

IN SPAIN.

"Such a moment," he said, "makes it worth while to be born, to fall, and to disappear!" and he smiled. The young wife raised her hand in mild reproach, and the shadow passed away from her world, and they were happy—quite happy.

Everything seemed to work together for them. They advanced in honour, in prosperity, and in joy. There was a change, indeed, but only a change of place; not in enjoyment of life and of happiness. The

young man was sent by his sovereign as ambassador to the court of Russia. This was an honourable office, and his birth and his acquirements gave him a title to be thus honoured. He possessed a great fortune, and his wife had brought him wealth equal to his own, for she was the daughter of a rich and respected merchant. One of this merchant's largest and finest ships was to be dispatched during that year to Stockholm, and it was arranged that the dear young people, the daughter and the son-in-law, should travel in it to St. Petersburg. And all the arrangements on board were princely—rich carpets for the feet, and silk and luxury on all sides.

In an old heroic song, "The King's Son of England," it says, "Moreover, he sailed in a gallant ship, and the anchor was gilded with ruddy gold, and each rope was woven through with silk," And this ship involuntarily rose in the mind of him who saw the vessel from Spain, for here was the same pomp, and the same parting thought naturally arose—the thought:

"God grant that we all in joy
Once more may meet again."

And the wind blew fairly seaward from the Spanish shore, and the parting was to be but a brief one, for in a few weeks the voyagers would reach their destination; but when they came out upon the high seas, the wind sank, the sea became calm and shining, the stars of heaven gleamed brightly, and they were festive evenings that were spent in the sumptuous cabin.

At length the voyagers began to wish for wind, for a favouring breeze; but the breeze would not blow, or, if it did arise, it was contrary. Thus weeks passed away, two full months; and then at last the fair wind blew—it blew from the south-west. The ship sailed on the high seas between Scotland and Jutland, and the wind increased just as in the old song of "The King's Son of England."

"And it blew a storm, and the rain came down,
And they found not land nor shelter,
And forth they threw their anchor of gold,
As the wind blew westward, toward Denmark."

This all happened a long, long while ago. King Christian VII. then sat on the Danish throne, and he was still a young man. Much has happened since that time, much has changed or has been changed. Sea and moorland have been converted into green meadows, heath has become arable land, and in the shelter of the West Jute huts grow apple trees and rose bushes, though they certainly require to be sought

for, as they bend beneath the sharp west wind. In Western Jutland one may go back in thought to the old times, farther back than the days when Christian VII. bore rule. As it did then, in Jutland, the brown heath now also extends for miles, with its "Hun's Graves," its aërial spectacles, and its crossing, sandy, uneven roads; westward, where large rivulets run into the bays, extend marshes and meadow land, girdled with lofty sand-hills, which, like a row of Alps, raise their peaked summits towards the sea, only broken by the high clayey ridges, from which the waves year by year bite out huge mouthfuls, so that the impending shores fall down as if by the shock of an earthquake. Thus it is there to-day, and thus it was many, many years ago, when the happy pair were sailing in the gorgeous ship.

It was in the last days of September, a Sunday, and sunny weather; the chiming of the church bells in the bay of Nissum was wafted along like a chain of sounds. The churches there are erected almost entirely of hewn boulder stones, each like a piece of rock; the North Sea might foam over them, and they would not be overthrown. Most of them are without steeples, and the bells are hung between two beams in the open air. The service was over, and the congregation thronged out into the churchyard, where then, as now, not a tree nor a bush was to be seen; not a single flower had been planted there, nor had a wreath been laid upon the graves. Rough mounds show where the dead had been buried, and rank grass, tossed by the wind, grows thickly over the whole churchyard. Here and there a grave had a monument to show, in the shape of a half-decayed block of wood rudely shaped into the form of a coffin, the said block having been brought from the forest of West Jutland; but the forest of West Jutland is the wild sea itself, where the inhabitants find the hewn beams and planks and fragments which the breakers cast ashore. The wind and the sea fog soon destroy the wood. One of these blocks had been placed by loving hands on a child's grave, and one of the women, who had come out of the church, stepped towards it. She stood still in front of it, and let her glance rest on the discoloured memorial. A few moments afterwards her husband stepped up to her. Neither of them spoke a word, but he took her hand, and they wandered across the brown heath, over moor and meadow, towards the sand-hills; for a long time they thus walked silently side by side.

"That was a good sermon to-day," the man said at length. "If we had not God to look to, we should have nothing!"

"Yes," observed the woman, "He sends joy and sorrow, and He has a right to send them. To-morrow our little boy would have been five years old, if we had been allowed to keep him."

"You will gain nothing by fretting, wife," said the man. "The boy is well provided for. He is there whither we pray to go."

And they said nothing more, but went forward to their house among the sand-hills. Suddenly, in front of one of the houses where the sea grass did not keep the sand down with its twining roots, there arose what appeared to be a column of smoke rising into the air. A gust of wind swept in among the hills, whirling the particles of sand high in the air. Another, and the strings of fish hung up to dry flapped and beat violently against the wall of the hut; and then all was still again, and the sun shone down hotly.

Man and wife stepped into the house. They had soon taken off their Sunday clothes, and emerging again, they hurried away over the dunes, which stood there like huge waves of sand suddenly arrested in their course, while the sandweeds and the dunegrass with its bluish stalks spread a changing colour over them. A few neighbours came up, and helped one another to draw the boats higher up on the sand. The wind now blew more sharply than before; it was cutting and cold: and when they went back over the sand-hills, sand and little pointed stones blew into their faces. The waves reared themselves up with their white crowns of foam, and the wind cut off their crests, flinging the foam far around.

The evening came on. In the air was a swelling roar, moaning and complaining like a troop of despairing spirits, that sounded above the hoarse rolling of the sea; for the fisher's little hut was on the very margin. The sand rattled against the window panes, and every now and then came a violent gust of wind, that shook the house to its foundations. It was dark, but towards midnight the moon would rise.

The air became clearer, but the storm swept in all its gigantic force over the purturbed sea. The fisher people had long gone to bed, but in such weather there was no chance of closing an eye. Presently there was a knocking at the window, and the door was opened, and a voice said:

"There's a great ship fast stranded on the outermost reef."

In a moment the fish people had sprung from their couch, and hastily arrayed themselves.

The moon had risen, it was light enough to make the surrounding objects visible, to those who could open their eyes for the blinding clouds of sand. The violence of the wind was terrible; and only by creeping forward between the gusts was it possible to pass among the sand-hills; and now the salt spray flew up from the sea like down, while the ocean foamed like a roaring cataract towards the beach. It

required a practised eye to descry the vessel out in the offing. The vessel was a noble brig. The billows now lifted it over the reef, three or four cables' lengths out of the usual channel. It drove towards the land, struck against the second reef, and remained fixed.

To render assistance was impossible; the sea rolled fairly in upon the vessel, making a clean breach over her. Those on shore fancied they heard the cries of help from on board, and could plainly descry the busy

SAVED FROM THE WRECK.

useless efforts made by the stranded crew. Now a wave came rolling onward, falling like a rock upon the bowsprit, and tearing it from the brig. The stern was lifted high above the flood. Two people were seen to embrace and plunge together into the sea; in a moment more, and one of the largest waves that rolled towards the sand-hills threw a body upon the shore. It was a woman, and appeared quite dead, said the sailors; but some women thought they discerned signs of life in her, and the stranger was carried across the sand-hills into the fisher-

man's hut. How beautiful and fair she was! certainly she must be a great lady.

They laid her upon the humble bed that boasted not a yard of linen; but there was a woollen coverlet, and that would keep the occupant warm.

Life returned to her, but she was delirious, and knew nothing of what had happened, or where she was; and it was better so, for everything she loved and valued lay buried in the sea. It was with her ship as with the vessel in the song of "The King's Son of England."

> "Alas, it was a grief to see
> How the gallant ship sank speedily."

Portions of wreck and fragments of wood drifted ashore, and they were all that remained of what had been the ship. The wind still drove howling over the coast. For a few moments the strange lady seemed to rest; but she awoke in pain, and cries of anguish and fear came from her lips. She opened her wonderfully beautiful eyes, and spoke a few words, but none understood her.

And behold, as a reward for the pain and sorrow she had undergone, she held in her arms a new-born child, the child that was to have rested upon a gorgeous couch, surrounded by silken curtains, in the sumptuous home. It was to have been welcomed with joy to a life rich in all the goods of the earth; and now Providence had caused it to be born in this humble retreat, and not even a kiss did it receive from its mother.

The fisher's wife laid the child upon the mother's bosom, and it rested on a heart that beat no more, for she was dead. The child who was to be nursed by wealth and fortune, was cast into the world, washed by the sea among the sand-hills, to partake the fate and heavy days of the poor. And here again comes into our mind the old song of the English king's son, in which mention is made of the customs prevalent at that time, when knights and squires plundered those who had been saved from shipwreck.

The ship had been stranded some distance south of Nissum Bay. The hard, inhuman days in which, as we have stated, the inhabitants of the Jutland shores did evil to the shipwrecked, were long past. Affection and sympathy and self-sacrifice for the unfortunate were to be found, as they are to be found in our own time, in many a brilliant example. The dying mother and the unfortunate child would have found succour and help wherever the wind blew them; but nowhere could they have found more earnest care than in the hut of the poor

fisherwife; who had stood but yesterday, with a heavy heart, beside the grave which covered her child, which would have been five years old that day, if God had spared it to her.

No one knew who the dead stranger was, or could even form a conjecture. The pieces of wreck said nothing on the subject.

Into the rich house in Spain no tidings penetrated of the fate of the daughter and the son-in-law. They had not arrived at their destined post, and violent storms had raged during the past weeks. At last the verdict was given, "Foundered at sea—all lost."

But in the sand-hills near Hunsby, in the fisherman's hut, lived a little scion of the rich Spanish family.

Where Heaven sends food for two, a third can manage to make a meal, and in the depths of the sea is many a dish of fish for the hungry.

And they called the boy Jürgen.

"It must certainly be a Jewish child," the people said, "it looks so swarthy."

"It might be an Italian or a Spaniard," observed the clergyman.

But to the fisherwoman these three nations seemed all the same, and she consoled herself with the idea that the child was baptized as a Christian.

The boy throve. The noble blood in his veins was warm, and he became strong on his homely fare. He grew apace in the humble house, and the Danish dialact spoken by the West Jutes became his language. The pomegranate seed from Spanish soil became a hardy plant on the coast of West Jutland. Such may be a man's fate! To this home he clung with the roots of his whole being. He was to have experience of cold and hunger, and the misfortunes and hardships that surrounded the humble; but he tasted also of the poor man's joys.

Childhood has sunny heights for all, whose memory gleams through the whole after life. The boy had many opportunities for pleasure and play. The whole coast, for miles and miles, was full of playthings; for it was a mosaic of pebbles, red as coral, yellow as amber, and others again white and rounded like birds' eggs; and all smoothed and prepared by the sea. Even the bleached fish skeletons, the water plants dried by the wind, seaweed, white, gleaming, and long linen-like bands, waving among the stones, all these seemed made to give pleasure and amusement to the eye and the thoughts; and the boy had an intelligent mind—many and great faculties lay dormant in him. How readily he retained in his mind the stories and songs he heard, and how neat-handed he was! With stones and mussel shells he put together pictures and ships with which one could decorate the room; and he could cut out his thoughts wonderfully on a stick, his foster-mother

said, though the boy was still so young and little! His voice sounded sweetly; every melody flowed at once from his lips. Many chords were attained in his heart which might have sounded out into the world, if he had been placed elsewhere than in the fisherman's hut by the North Sea.

One day another ship was stranded there. Among other things, a chest of rare flower bulbs floated ashore. Some were put into the cooking pots, for they were thought to be eatable, and others lay and shrivelled in the sand, but they did not accomplish their purpose, or unfold the richness of colour whose germ was within them. Would it be better with Jürgen? The flower bulbs had soon played their part, but he had still years of apprenticeship before him.

Neither he nor his friends remarked in what a solitary and uniform way one day succeeded another; for there was plenty to do and to see. The sea itself was a great lesson book, unfolding a new leaf every day, such as calm and storm, breakers and waifs. The visits to the church were festal visits. But among the festal visits in the fisherman's house, one was particularly distinguished. It was repeated twice in the year, and was, in fact, the visit of the brother of Jürgen's foster-mother, the eel breeder from Zjaltring, upon the neighbourhood of the "Bow Hill." He used to come in a cart painted red, and filled with eels. The cart was covered and locked like a box, and painted all over with blue and white tulips. It was drawn by two dun oxen, and Jürgen was allowed to guide them.

The eel breeder was a witty fellow, a merry guest, and brought a measure of brandy with him. Every one received a small glassful, or a cupful when there was a scarcity of glasses: even Jürgen had as much as a large thimbleful, that he might digest the fat eel, the eel breeder said, who always told the same story over again, and when his hearers laughed he immediately told it over again to the same audience. As, during his childhood, and even later, Jürgen used many expressions from this story of the eel breeder's, and made use of it in various ways, it is as well that we should listen to it too. Here it is:

"The eels went into the bay; and the mother-eel said to her daughters, who begged leave to go a little way up the bay, 'Don't go too far: the ugly eel spearer might come and snap you all up.' But they went too far; and of eight daughters only three came back to the eel-mother, and these wept and said, 'We only went a little way before the door, and the ugly eel spearer came directly, and stabbed five of our party to death.' 'They 'll come again,' said the mother-eel. 'Oh no,' exclaimed the daughters, 'for he skinned them, and cut them in two, and fried

them.' 'Oh, they'll come again,' the mother-eel persisted. 'No,' replied the daughters, 'for he ate them up.' 'They'll come again,' repeated the mother-eel. 'But he drank brandy after them,' continued the daughters. 'Ah, then they'll never come back,' said the mother, and she burst out crying, 'It's the brandy that buries the eels.'

"And therefore," said the eel breeder, in conclusion, "it is always right to take brandy after eating eels."

THE EEL BREEDER'S VISIT.

And this story was the tinsel thread, the most humorous recollection of Jürgen's life. *He* likewise wanted to go a little way outside the door, and up the bay—that is to say, out into the world in a ship; and his mother said, like the eel breeder, "There are so many bad people—eel spearers!" But he wished to go a little way past the sand-hills, a little way into the dunes, and he succeeded in doing so. Four merry days, the happiest of his childhood, unrolled themselves, and the whole beauty and splendour of Jutland, all the joy and sunshine of his home,

was concentrated in these. He was to go to a festival—though it was certainly a burial feast.

A wealthy relative of the fisherman's family had died. The farm lay deep in the country, eastward, and a point towards the north, as the saying is. Jürgen's foster-parents were to go, and he was to accompany them from the dunes, across heath and moor. They came to the green meadows where the river Skjärn rolls its course, the river of many eels, where mother-eels dwell with their daughters, who are caught and eaten up by wicked people. But men were said sometimes to have acted no better towards their own fellow men; for had not the knight, Sir Bugge, been murdered by wicked people? and though he was well spoken of, had he not wanted to kill the architect, as the legend tells us, who had built for him the castle, with the thick walls and tower, where Jürgen and his parents now stood, and where the river falls into the bay? The wall on the ramparts still remained, and red crumbling fragments lay strewn around. Here it was that Sir Bugge, after the architect had left him, said to one of his men, "Go thou after him, and say, 'Master, the tower shakes.' If he turns round, you are to kill him, and take from him the money I paid him; but if he does not turn round, let him depart in peace." The man obeyed, and the architect never turned round, but called back, "The tower does not shake in the least, but one day there will come a man from the west, in a blue cloak, who will cause it to shake!" And indeed so it chanced, a hundred years later; for the North Sea broke in, and the tower was cast down, but the man who then possessed the castle, Prebjörn Gyldenstjerne, built a new castle higher up, at the end of the meadow, and that stands to this day, and is called Nörre Vosborg.

Past this castle went Jürgen and his foster-parents. They had told him its story during the long winter evenings, and now he saw the lordly castle, with its double moat, and trees, and bushes; the wall, covered with ferns, rose within the moat; but most beautiful of all were the lofty lime trees, which grew up to the highest windows, and filled the air with sweet fragrance. In a corner of the garden towards the north-west stood a great bush full of blossom like winter snow amid the summer's green: it was a juniper bush, the first that Jürgen had seen thus in bloom. He never forgot it, nor the lime tree: the child's soul treasured up these remembrances of beauty and fragrance to gladden the old man.

From Nörre Vosborg, where the juniper blossomed, the way went more easily; for they encountered other guests who were also bound for the burial, and were riding in waggons. Our travellers had to sit all

together on a little box at the back of the waggon, but even this was preferable to walking, they thought. So they pursued their journey in the waggon across the rugged heath. The oxen which drew the vehicle slipped every now and then, where a patch of fresh grass appeared amid the heather. The sun shone warm, and it was wonderful to behold how in the far distance something like smoke seemed to be rising; and yet this smoke was clearer than the mist; it was transparent, and looked like rays of light rolling and dancing afar over the heath.

"That is Lokeman driving his sheep," said some one; and this was enough to excite the fancy of Jürgen. It seemed to him as if they were now going to enter fairyland, though everything was still real.

How quiet it was! Far and wide the heath extended around them like a beautiful carpet. The heather bloomed; the juniper bushes and the fresh oak saplings stood up like nosegays from the earth. An inviting place for a frolic, if it were not for the number of poisonous adders of which the travellers spoke, as they did also of the wolves which formerly infested the place, from which circumstance the region was still called the Wolfsborg region. The old man who guided the oxen related how, in the lifetime of his father, the horses had to sustain many a hard fight with the wild beasts that were now extinct; and how he himself, when he went out one morning to bring in the horses, had found one of them standing with its fore-feet on a wolf it had killed, after the savage beast had torn and lacerated the legs of the brave horse.

The journey over the heath and the deep sand was only too quickly accomplished. They stopped before the house of mourning, where they found plenty of guests within and without. Waggon after waggon stood ranged in a row, and horses and oxen went out to crop the scanty pasture. Great sand-hills, like those at home in the North Sea, rose behind the house, and extended far and wide. How had they come here, miles into the interior of the land, and as large and high as those on the coast? The wind had lifted and carried them hither, and to them also a history was attached.

Psalms were sung, and a few of the old people shed tears; beyond this, the guests were cheerful enough, as it appeared to Jürgen, and there was plenty to eat and drink. Eels there were of the fattest, upon which brandy should be poured to bury them, as the eel breeder said; and certainly his maxim was here carried out.

Jürgen went to and fro in the house. On the third day he felt quite at home, like as in the fisherman's hut on the sand-hills where he had passed his early days. Here on the heath there was certainly an unheard-of wealth, for the flowers and blackberries and bilberries were to

be found in plenty, so large and sweet, that when they were crushed beneath the tread of the passers by, the heath was coloured with their red juice.

Here was a Hun's Grave, and yonder another. Columns of smoke rose into the still air; it was a heath-fire, he was told, that shone so splendidly in the dark evening.

Now came the fourth day, and the funeral festivities were to conclude, and they were to go back from the land-dunes to the sand-dunes.

"Ours are the best," said the old fisherman, Jürgen's foster-father; "these have no strength."

And they spoke of the way in which the sand-dunes had come into the country, and it seemed all very intelligible. This was the explanation they gave:

A corpse had been found on the coast, and the peasants had buried it in the churchyard; and from that time the sand began to fly, and the sea broke in violently. A wise man in the parish advised them to open the grave and to look if the buried man was not lying sucking his thumb; for if so, he was a man of the sea, and the sea would not rest until it had got him back. So the grave was opened, and he really was found with his thumb in his mouth. So they laid him upon a cart and harnessed two oxen before it; and as if stung by an adder, the oxen ran away with the man of the sea over heath and moorland to the ocean; and then the sand ceased flying inland, but the hills that had been heaped up still remained there. All this Jürgen heard and treasured in his memory from the happiest days of his childhood, the days of the burial feast. How glorious it was to get out into strange regions, and to see strange people! And he was to go farther still. He was not yet fourteen years old when he went out in a ship to see what the world could show him: bad weather, heavy seas, malice, and hard men—these were his experiences, for he became a ship boy. There were cold nights, and bad living, and blows to be endured; then he felt as if his noble Spanish blood boiled within him, and bitter wicked words seethed up to his lips; but it was better to gulp them down, though he felt as the eel must feel when it is flayed and cut up, and put into the frying-pan.

"I shall come again!" said a voice within him. He saw the Spanish coast, the native land of his parents. He even saw the town where they had lived in happiness and prosperity; but he knew nothing of his home or race, and his race knew just as little about him.

The poor ship boy was not allowed to land; but on the last day of their stay he managed to get ashore. There were several purchases to be made, and he was to carry them on board.

There stood Jürgen in his shabby clothes, which looked as if they had been washed in the ditch and dried in the chimney: for the first time he, the inhabitant of the dunes, saw a great city. How lofty the houses seemed, and how full of people were the streets! some pushing this way, some that—a perfect maelstrom of citizens and peasants, monks and soldiers—a calling and shouting, and jingling of bell-harnessed asses and mules, and the church bells chiming between song and sound, hammering and knocking, all going on at once. Every handicraft had its home in the basements of the houses or in the lanes; and the sun shone so hotly, and the air was so close, that one seemed to be in an oven full of beetles, cockchafers, bees, and flies, all humming and murmering together. Jürgen hardly knew where he was or which way he went. Then he saw just in front of him the mighty portal of the cathedral; the lights were gleaming in the dark aisles, and a fragrance of incense was wafted towards him. Even the poorest beggar ventured up the steps into the temple. The sailor with whom Jürgen went took his way through the church; and Jürgen stood in the sanctuary. Coloured pictures gleamed from their golden ground. On the altar stood the figure of the Virgin with the child Jesus, surrounded by lights and flowers; priests in festive garb were chanting, and choir boys, beautifully attired, swung the silver censer. What splendour, what magnificence did he see here! It streamed through his soul and overpowered him; the church and the faith of his parents surrounded him, and touched a chord in his soul, so that the tears overflowed his eyes.

From the church they went to the market-place. Here a quantity of provisions were given him to carry. The way to the harbour was long, and, tired and overpowered by various emotions, he rested for a few moments before a splendid house, with marble pillars, statues, and broad staircases. Here he rested his burden against the wall. Then a liveried porter came out, lifted up a silver-headed cane, and drove him away—him, the grandson of the house. But no one there knew that, and he just as little as any one. And afterwards he went on board again, and there were hard words and cuffs, little sleep and much work; such were his experiences. They say that it is well to suffer in youth, if age brings something to make up for it.

His time of servitude on shipboard had expired, and the vessel lay once more at Ringkjöbing, in Jutland: he came ashore and went home to the sand-dunes by Hunsby; but his foster-mother had died while he was away on his voyage.

A hard winter followed that summer. Snowstorms swept over land

and sea, and there was a difficulty in getting about. How variously things were distributed in the world! here biting cold and snow-storms, while in the Spanish land there was burning sunshine and oppressive heat. And yet, when here at home there came a clear frosty day, and Jürgen saw the swans flying in numbers from the sea towards the land, and across to Vosborg, it appeared to him that people could breathe most freely here; and here too was a splendid summer! In imagination he saw the heath bloom and grow purple with rich juicy berries, and saw the elder trees and the lime trees at Vosborg in blossom. He determined to go there once more.

Spring came on, and the fishery began. Jürgen was an active assistant in this; he had grown in the last year, and was quick at work. He was full of life, he understood how to swim, to tread water, to turn over and tumble in the flood. They often warned him to beware of the troops of dogfish, which could seize the best swimmer, and draw him down, and devour him; but such was not Jürgen's fate.

At the neighbour's on the dune was a boy named Martin, with whom Jürgen was very friendly, and the two took service in the same ship to Norway, and also went together to Holland; and they had never had any quarrel; but a quarrel can easily come, for when a person is hot by nature, he often uses strong gestures, and that is what Jürgen did one day on board when they had a quarrel about nothing at all. They were sitting behind the cabin door, eating out of a delf plate which they had placed between them. Jürgen held his pocket-knife in his hand, and lifted it against Martin, and at the same time became ashy pale in the face, and his eyes had an ugly look. Martin only said,

"Ah! ha! you're one of that sort, who are fond of using the knife!"

Hardly were the words spoken, when Jürgen's hand sank down. He answered not a syllable, but went on eating, and afterwards walked away to his work. When they were resting again, he stepped up to Martin, and said,

"You may hit me in the face! I have deserved it. But I feel as if I had a pot in me that boiled over."

"There let the thing rest," replied Martin; and after that they were almost doubly as good friends as before; and when afterwards they got back to the dunes and began telling their adventures, this was told among the rest; and Martin said that Jürgen was certainly passionate, but a good fellow for all that.

They were both young and strong, well-grown and stalwart; but Jürgen was the cleverer of the two.

In Norway the peasants go into the mountains, and lead out the cattle there to pasture. On the west coast of Jutland, huts have been erected among the sand-hills; they are built of pieces of wreck, and roofed with turf and heather. There are sleeping-places around the walls, and here the fisher people live and sleep during the early spring. Every fisherman has his female helper, his manager, as she is called, whose business consists in baiting the hooks, preparing the warm beer for the fishermen when they come ashore, and getting their dinners cooked when they come back into the hut tired and hungry. Moreover, the managers bring up the fish from the boat, cut them open, prepare them, and have generally a great deal to do.

Jürgen, his father, and several other fishermen and their managers inhabited the same hut; Martin lived in the next one.

One of the girls, Else by name, had known Jürgen from childhood: they were glad to see each other, and in many things were of the same mind; but in outward appearance they were entirely opposite; for he was brown, whereas she was pale and had flaxen hair, and eyes as blue as the sea in sunshine.

One day as they were walking together, and Jürgen held her hand in his very firmly and warmly, she said to him,

"Jürgen, I have something weighing upon my heart! Let me be your manager, for you are like a brother to me, whereas Martin, who has engaged me—he and I are lovers——but you need not tell that to the rest."

And it seemed to Jürgen as if the loose sand were giving way under his feet. He spoke not a word, but only nodded his head, which signified "yes." More was not required; but suddenly he felt in his heart that he detested Martin; and the longer he considered of this—for he had never thought of Else in this way before—the more did it become clear to him that Martin had stolen from him the only being he loved; and now it was all at once plain to him, that Else was the being in question.

When the sea is somewhat disturbed, and the fishermen come home in their great boat, it is a sight to behold how they cross the reefs. One of the men stands upright in the bow of the boat, and the others watch him, sitting with the oars in their hands. Outside the reef they appear to be rowing not towards the land, but backing out to sea, till the man standing in the boat gives them the sign that the great wave is coming which is to float them across the reef; and accordingly the boat is lifted—lifted high in the air, so that its keel is seen from the shore; and in the next minute the whole boat is hidden from the eye; neither mast nor keel nor people can be seen, as though the sea had devoured

them; but in a few moments they emerge like a great sea animal climbing up the waves, and the oars move as if the creature had legs. The second and the third reef are passed in the same manner; and now the fishermen jump into the water; every wave helps them, and pushes the boat well forward, till at length they have drawn it beyond the range of the breakers.

A wrong order given in front of the reef—the slightest hesitation—and the boat must founder.

"Then it would be all over with me, and Martin too!" This thought struck Jürgen while they were out at sea, where his foster-father had been taken alarmingly ill. The fever had seized him. They were only a few oars' strokes from the reef, and Jürgen sprang from his seat, and stood up in the bow.

"Father—let me come!" he said; and his eye glanced towards Martin, and across the waves: but while every oar bent with the exertions of the rowers, as the great wave came towering towards them, he beheld the pale face of his father, and dare not obey the evil impulse that had seized him. The boat came safely across the reef to land, but the evil thought remained in his blood, and roused up every little fibre of bitterness which had remained in his memory since he and Martin had been comrades. But he could not weave the fibres together, nor did he endeavour to do so. He felt that Martin had despoiled him, and this was enough to make him detest his former friend. Several of the fishermen noticed this, but not Martin, who continued obliging and talkative—the latter a little too much.

Jürgen's adopted father had to keep his bed, which became his death-bed, for in the next week he died; and now Jürgen was installed as heir in the little house behind the sand-hills. It was but a little house, certainly, but still it was something, and Martin had nothing of the kind.

"You will not take sea service again, Jürgen?" observed one of the old fishermen. "You will always stay with us, now."

But this was not Jürgen's intention, for he was just thinking of looking about him a little in the world. The eel breeder of Zjaltring had an uncle in Alt-Skage, who was a fisherman, but at the same time a prosperous merchant, who had ships upon the sea; he was said to be a good old man, and it would not be amiss to enter his service. Alt-Skage lies in the extreme north of Jutland, as far removed from the Hunsby dunes as one can travel in that country; and this is just what pleased Jürgen, for he did not want to remain till the wedding of Martin and Else, which was to be celebrated in a few weeks.

ELSE AFFIRMS HER PREFERENCE FOR MARTIN.

The old fisherman asserted that it was foolish now to quit the neighbourhood; for that Jürgen had a home, and Else would probably be inclined to take him rather than Martin.

Jürgen answered so much at random, that it was not easy to understand what he meant; but the old man brought Else to him, and she said, "You have a home now; that ought to be well considered."

And Jürgen thought of many things.

The sea has heavy waves, but there are heavier waves in the human heart. Many thoughts, strong and weak, thronged through Jürgen's brain; and he said to Else,

"If Martin had a house like mine, whom would you rather have?"

"But Martin has no house, and cannot get one."

"But let us suppose he had one."

"Why then I would certainly take Martin, for that 's what my heart tells me; but one can't live upon that."

And Jürgen thought of these things all night through. Something was working within him, he could not understand what it was, but he had a thought that was stronger than his love for Else; and so he went to Martin, and what he said and did there was well considered. He let the house to Martin on the most liberal terms, saying that he wished to go to sea again, because it pleased him to do so. And Else kissed him on the mouth when she heard that, for she loved Martin best.

In the early morning Jürgen purposed to start. On the evening before his departure, when it was already growing late, he felt a wish to visit Martin once more; he started, and among the dunes the old fisher met him, who was angry at his going. The old man made jokes about Martin, and declared there must be some magic about that fellow, "of whom all the girls were so fond." Jürgen paid no heed to this speech, but said farewell to the old man, and went on towards the house where Martin dwelt. He heard loud talking within. Martin was not alone, and this made Jürgen waver in his determination, for he did not wish to encounter Else; and on second consideration, he thought it better not to hear Martin thank him again, and therefore turned back.

On the following morning, before break of day, he fastened his knapsack, took his wooden provision box in his hand, and went away among the sand-hills towards the coast path. The way was easier to traverse than the heavy sand road, and moreover shorter; for he intended to go in the first instance to Zjaltring, by Bowberg, where the eel breeder lived, to whom he had promised a visit.

The sea lay pure and blue before him, and mussel shells and sea pebbles, the playthings of his youth, crunched under his feet. While he was thus marching on, his nose suddenly began to bleed: it was a trifling incident, but little things can have great significances. A few large drops of blood fell upon one of his sleeves. He wiped them off and stopped the bleeding, and it seemed to him as if this had cleared and lightened his brain. In the sand the sea-eringa was blooming here and there. He broke off a stalk and stuck it in his hat; he determined to be merry and of good cheer, for he was going into the wide world—

"a little way outside the door, in front of the bay," as the young eels had said. "Beware of bad people, who will catch you and flay you, cut you in two, and put you in the frying-pan!" he repeated in his mind, and smiled, for he thought he should find his way through the world—good courage is a strong weapon!

The sun already stood high when he approached the narrow entrance to Nissum Bay. He looked back, and saw a couple of horsemen galloping a long distance behind him, and they were accompanied by other people. But this concerned him nothing.

The ferry was on the opposite side of the bay. Jürgen called to the ferryman; and when the latter came over with the boat, Jürgen stepped in; but before they had gone half-way across, the men whom he had seen riding so hastily behind him, hailed the ferryman, and summoned him to return in the name of the law. Jürgen did not understand the reason of this, but he thought it would be best to turn back, and therefore himself took an oar and returned. The moment the boat touched the shore, the men sprang on board, and, before he was aware, they had bound his hands with a rope.

"Thy wicked deed will cost thee thy life," they said. "It is well that we caught thee."

He was accused of nothing less than murder. Martin had been found dead, with a knife thrust through his neck. One of the fishermen had (late on the previous evening) met Jürgen going towards Martin's house; and this was not the first time Jürgen had raised his knife against Martin — so they knew that he was the murderer. The town in which the prison was built was a long way off, and the wind was contrary for going there; but not half an hour would be required to get across the bay, and a quarter of an hour would bring them from thence to Nörre Vosborg, a great castle with walls and ditches. One of Jürgen's captors was a fisherman, a brother of the keeper of the castle; and he declared it might be managed that Jürgen should for the present be put into the dungeon at Vosborg, where Long Martha the gipsy had been shut up till her execution.

No attention was paid to the defence made by Jürgen; the few drops of blood upon his shirt-sleeve bore heavy witness against him. But Jürgen was conscious of innocence; and as there was no chance of immediately righting himself, he submitted to his fate.

The party landed just at the spot where Sir Bugge's castle had stood and where Jürgen had walked with his foster-parents after the burial feast, during the four happiest days of his childhood. He was led by the old path over the meadow to Vosborg; and again the elder blos-

somed and the lofty lindens smelt sweet, and it seemed but yesterday that he had left the spot.

In the two wings of the castle a staircase leads down to a spot below the entrance, and from thence there is access to a low vaulted cellar. Here Long Martha had been imprisoned, and hence she had been led away to the scaffold. She had eaten the hearts of five children, and had been under the delusion that if she could obtain two more, she would be able to fly and to make herself invisible. In the midst of the cellar roof was a little narrow air-hole, but no window. The blooming lindens could not waft a breath of comforting fragrance into that abode, where all was dark and mouldy. Only a rough bench stood in the prison; but "a good conscience is a soft pillow," and consequently Jürgen could sleep well.

The thick oaken door was locked, and secured on the outside by an iron bar; but the goblin of superstition can creep through a key-hole into the baron's castle just as into the fisherman's hut; and wherefore should he not creep in here, where Jürgen sat thinking of Long Martha and her evil deeds? Her last thought on the night before her execution had filled this space; and all the magic came into Jürgen's mind which tradition asserted to have been practised there in the old times, when Sir Schwanwedel dwelt there. All this passed through Jürgen's mind, and made him shudder; but a sunbeam — a refreshing thought from without — penetrated his heart even here; it was the remembrance of the blooming elder and the fragrant lime trees.

He was not left there long. They carried him off to the town of Ringkjöbing, where his imprisonment was just as hard.

Those times were not like ours. Hard measure was dealt out to the "common" people; and it was just after the days when farms were converted into knights' estates, on which occasions coachmen and servants were often made magistrates, and had it in their power to sentence a poor man, for a small offence, to lose his property and to corporal punishment. Judges of this kind were still to be found; and in Jutland, far from the capital and from the enlightened well-meaning head of the government, the law was still sometimes very loosely administered; and the smallest grievance that Jürgen had to expect was that his case would be protracted.

Cold and cheerless was his abode — and when would this state of things end? He had innocently sunk into misfortune and sorrow — that was his fate. He had leisure now to ponder on the difference of fortune on earth, and to wonder why this fate had been allotted to him; and he felt sure that the question would be answered in the next life —

the existence that awaits us when this is over. This faith had grown strong in him in the poor fisherman's hut; that which had never shone into his father's mind, in all the richness and sunshine of Spain, was vouchsafed as a light of comfort in his poverty and distress — a sign of mercy from God that never deceives.

The spring storms began to blow. The rolling and moaning of the North Sea could be heard for miles inland when the wind was lulled; for then it sounded like the rushing of a thousand waggons over a hard road with a mine beneath. Jürgen, in his prison, heard these sounds, and it was a relief to him. No melody could have appealed so directly to his heart as did these sounds of the sea — the rolling sea, the boundless sea, on which a man can be borne across the world before the wind, carrying his own house with him wherever he is driven, just as the snail carries its home even into a strange land.

How he listened to the deep moaning, and how the thought arose in him — "Free! free! How happy to be free, even without shoes and in ragged clothes!" Sometimes, when such thoughts crossed his mind, the fiery nature rose within him, and he beat the wall with his clenched fists.

Weeks, months, a whole year had gone by, when a vagabond — Niels, the thief, called also the horse couper — was arrested; and now the better times came, and it was seen what wrong Jürgen had endured.

In the neighbourhood of Ringkjöbing, at a beer-house, Niels, the thief, had met Martin on the afternoon before Jürgen's departure from home and before the murder. A few glasses were drunk — not enough to cloud any one's brain, but yet enough to loosen Martin's tongue; and he began to boast, and to say that he had obtained a house, and intended to marry; and when Niels asked where he intended to get the money, Martin shook his pocket proudly, and said,

"The money is there, where it ought to be."

This boast cost him his life; for when he went home, Niels went after him, and thrust a knife through his throat, to rob the murdered man of the expected gold, which did not exist.

This was circumstantially explained; but for us it is enough to know that Jürgen was set at liberty. But what amends did he get for having been imprisoned a whole year, and shut out from all communion with men? They told him he was fortunate in being proved innocent, and that he might go. The burgomaster gave him two dollars for travelling expenses, and many citizens offered him provisions and beer — there were still good men, not all "grind and flay." But the best of all was, that the merchant Brönne of Skjagen, the same into whose service

Jürgen intended to go a year since, was just at that time on business in the town of Ringkjöbing. Brönne heard the whole story; and the man had a good heart, and understood what Jürgen must have felt and suffered. He therefore made up his mind to make it up to the poor lad, and convince him that there were still kind folks in the world.

So Jürgen went forth from the prison as if to Paradise, to find freedom, affection, and trust. He was to travel this road now; for no goblet of life is all bitterness: no good man would pour out such measure to his fellow man, and how should He do it, who is love itself?

"Let all that be buried and forgotten," said Brönne the merchant. "Let us draw a thick line through last year; and we will even burn the calendar. And in two days we'll start for dear, friendly, peaceful Skjagen. They call Skjagen an out-of-the-way corner; but it's a good warm chimney-corner, and its windows open towards every part of the world."

That was a journey! — it was like taking fresh breath — out of the cold dungeon air into the warm sunshine! The heath stood blooming in its greatest pride, and the herd-boy sat on the Hun's Grave and blew his pipe, which he had carved for himself out of the sheep's bone. Fata Morgana, the beautiful aërial phenomenon of the desert, showed itself with hanging gardens and swaying forests, and the wonderful cloud phenomenon, called here the "Lokeman driving his flock," was seen likewise.

Up through the land of the Wendels, up towards Skjagen, they went, from whence the men with the long beards (the Longobardi, or Lombards) had emigrated in the days when, in the reign of King Snio, all the children and the old people were to have been killed, till the noble Dame Gambaruk proposed that the young people had better emigrate. All this was known to Jürgen — thus much knowledge he had; and even if he did not know the land of the Lombards beyond the high Alps, he had an idea how it must be there, for in his boyhood he had been in the south, in Spain. He thought of the southern fruits piled up there; of the red pomegranate blossoms; of the humming, murmuring, and toiling in the great beehive of a city he had seen; but, after all, home is best; and Jürgen's home was Denmark.

At length they reached "Wendelskajn," as Skjagen is called in the old Norwegian and Icelandic writings. Then already Old Skjagen, with the western and eastern town, extended for miles, with sand-hills and arable land, as far as the lighthouse near the "Skjagenzweig." Then, as now, the houses were strewn among the wind-raised sand-hills — a

JÜRGEN'S BETTER FORTUNE.

desert where the wind sports with the sand, and where the voices of the seamen and the wild swans strike harshly on the ear. In the south-west, a mile from the sea, lies Old Skjagen; and here dwelt merchant Brönne, and here Jürgen was henceforth to dwell. The great house was painted with tar; the smaller buildings had each an overturned boat for a roof; the pig-sty had been put together of pieces of wreck. There was no fence here, for indeed there was nothing to fence in; but

long rows of fishes were hung upon lines, one above the other, to dry in the wind. The whole coast was strewn with spoilt herrings; for there were so many of those fish, that a net was scarcely thrown into the sea before they were caught by cartloads; there were so many, that often they were thrown back into the sea, or left to lie on the shore.

The old man's wife and daughter, and his servants too, came rejoicingly to meet him. There was a great pressing of hands, and talking, and questioning. And the daughter, what a lovely face and bright eyes she had!

The interior of the house was roomy and comfortable. Fritters that a king would have looked upon as a dainty dish, were placed on the table; and there was wine from the vineyard of Skjagen — that is, the sea; for there the grapes come ashore ready pressed and prepared in barrels and in bottles.

When the mother and daughter heard who Jürgen was, and how innocently he had suffered, they looked at him in a still more friendly way; and the eyes of the charming Clara were the friendliest of all. Jürgen found a happy home in Old Skjagen. It did his heart good; and his heart had been sorely tried, and had drunk the bitter goblet of love, which softens or hardens according to circumstances. Jürgen's heart was still soft — it was young, and there was still room in it; and therefore it was well that Mistress Clara was going in three weeks in her father's ship to Christiansand, in Norway, to visit an aunt, and to stay there the whole winter.

On the Sunday before her departure they all went to church, to the holy Communion. The church was large and handsome, and had been built centuries before by Scotchmen and Hollanders; it lay at a little distance from the town. It was certainly somewhat ruinous, and the road to it was heavy, through the deep sand; but the people gladly went through the difficulties to get to the house of God, to sing psalms and hear the sermon. The sand had heaped itself up round the walls of the church; but the graves were kept free from it.

It was the largest church north of the Limfjord. The Virgin Mary, with the golden crown on her head and the child Jesus in her arms, stood life-like upon the altar; the holy Apostles had been carved in the choir; and on the wall hung portraits of the old burgomasters and councillors of Skjagen; the pulpit was of carved work. The sun shone brightly into the church, and its radiance fell on the polished brass chandelier, and on the little ship that hung from the vaulted roof.

Jürgen felt as if overcome by a holy, child-like feeling, like that which possessed him when, as a boy, he had stood in the splendid Spanish

cathedral; but here the feeling was different, for he felt conscious of being one of the congregation.

After the sermon followed the holy Communion. He partook of the bread and wine, and it happened that he knelt beside Mistress Clara; but his thoughts were so fixed upon Heaven and the holy service, that he did not notice his neighbour until he rose from his knees, and then he saw tears rolling down her cheeks.

Two days later she left Skjagen and went to Norway. He stayed behind, and made himself useful in the house and in the business. He went out fishing, and at that time fish were more plentiful and larger than now. Every Sunday when he sat in the church, and his eye rested on the statue of the Virgin on the altar, his glance rested for a time on the spot where Mistress Clara had knelt beside him, and he thought of her, how hearty and kind she had been to him.

And so the autumn and the winter time passed away. There was wealth here, and a real family life; even down to the domestic animals, who were all well kept. The kitchen glittered with copper and tin and white plates, and from the roof hung hams and beef, and winter stores in plenty. All this is still to be seen in many rich farms of the west coast of Jutland: plenty to eat and drink, clean decorated rooms, clever heads, happy tempers, and hospitality prevail there as in an Arab tent.

Never since the famous burial feast had Jürgen spent such a happy time; and yet Mistress Clara was absent, except in the thoughts and memory of all.

In April a ship was to start for Norway, and Jürgen was to sail in it. He was full of life and spirits, and looked so stout and jovial that Dame Brönne declared it did her good to see him.

"And it's a pleasure to see you too, old wife," said the old merchant. "Jürgen has brought life into our winter evenings, and into you too, mother. You look younger this year, and you seem well and bonny. But then you were once the prettiest girl in Wiborg, and that 's saying a great deal, for I have always found the Wiborg girls the prettiest of any."

Jürgen said nothing to this, but he thought of a certain maiden of Skjagen; and he sailed to visit that maiden, for the ship steered to Christiansand, in Norway, and a favouring wind bore it rapidly to that town.

One morning merchant Brönne went out to the lighthouse that stands far away from Old Skjagen: the coal fire had long gone out, and the sun was already high when he mounted the tower. The sand-banks extend under the water a whole mile from the shore. Outside these

banks many ships were seen that day; and with the help of his telescope the old man thought he descried his own vessel, the "Karen Brönne."

Yes, surely there she was; and the ship was sailing up with Jürgen and Clara on board. The church and the lighthouse appeared to them as a heron and a swan rising from the blue waters. Clara sat on deck, and saw the sand-hills gradually looming forth: if the wind held she might reach her home in about an hour—so near were they to home and its joys—so near were they to death and its terrors. For a plank in the ship gave way, and the water rushed in. The crew flew to the pumps, and attempted to stop the leak. A signal of distress was hoisted; but they were still a full mile from the shore. Fishing boats were in sight, but they were still far distant. The wind blew shoreward, and the tide was in their favour too; but all was insufficient, for the ship sank. Jürgen threw his right arm about Clara, and pressed her close to him.

With what a look she gazed in his face! As he threw himself in God's name into the water with her, she uttered a cry; but still she felt safe, certain that he would not let her sink.

And now, in the hour of terror and danger, Jürgen experienced what the old song told:

> "And written it stood, how the brave king's son
> Embraced the bride his valour had won."

How rejoiced he felt that he was a good swimmer! He worked his way onward with his feet and with one hand, while with the other he tightly held the young girl. He rested upon the waves, he trod the water, he practised all the arts he knew, so as to reserve strength enough to reach the shore. He heard how Clara uttered a sigh, and felt a convulsive shudder pass through her, and he pressed her to him closer than ever. Now and then a wave rolled over her; and he was still a few cables' lengths from the land, when help came in the shape of an approaching boat. But under the water—he could see it clearly—stood a white form gazing at him: a wave lifted him up, and the form approached him: he felt a shock, and it grew dark, and everything vanished from his gaze.

On the sand-reef lay the wreck of a ship, the sea washed over it; the white figure-head leant against an anchor, the sharp iron extended just to the surface. Jürgen had come in contact with this, and the tide had driven him against it with double force. He sank down fainting with his load; but the next wave lifted him and the young girl aloft again.

The fishermen grasped them, and lifted them into the boat. The blood streamed down over Jürgen's face; he seemed dead, but he still clutched

the girl so tightly that they were obliged to loosen her by force from his grasp. And Clara lay pale and lifeless in the boat, that now made for the shore.

All means were tried to restore Clara to life; but she was dead! For some time he had been swimming onward with a corpse, and had exerted himself to exhaustion for one who was dead.

Jürgen was still breathing. The fishermen carried him into the nearest house upon the sand-hills. A kind of surgeon who lived there, and was at the same time a smith and a general dealer, bound up Jürgen's wounds in a temporary way, till a physician could be got next day from the nearest town.

The brain of the sick man was affected. In delirium he uttered wild cries; but on the third day he lay quiet and exhausted on his couch, and his life seemed to hang by a thread, and the physician said it would be best if this string snapped.

"Let us pray that God may take him to Himself; he will never be a sane man again!"

But life would not depart from him—the thread would not snap; but the thread of memory broke: the thread of all his mental power had been cut through; and, what was most terrible, a body remained—a living healthy body—that wandered about like a spectre.

Jürgen remained in the house of the merchant Brönne.

"He contracted his illness in his endeavour to save our child," said the old man, "and now he is our son."

People called Jürgen imbecile; but that was not the right expression. He was like an instrument, in which the strings are loose and will sound no more; only at times for a few minutes they regained their power, and then they sounded anew: old melodies were heard, snatches of song; pictures unrolled themselves, and then disappeared again in the mist, and once more he sat staring before him, without a thought. We may believe that he did not suffer, but his dark eyes lost their brightness, and looked only like black clouded glass.

"Poor imbecile Jürgen!" said the people.

He it was whose life was to have been so pleasant that it would be "presumption and pride" to expect or believe in a higher existence hereafter. All his great mental faculties had been lost; only hard days, pain, and disappointment had been his lot. He was like a rare plant torn from its native soil, and thrown upon the sand, to wither there. And was the image, fashioned in God's likeness, to have no better destination? Was it to be merely the sport of chance? No. The all-loving God would certainly repay him in the life to come, for

what he had suffered and lost here. "The Lord is good to all; and His mercy is over all His works." These words from the Psalms of David, the old pious wife of the merchant repeated in patience and hope, and the prayer of her heart was that Jürgen might soon be summoned to enter into the life eternal.

In the churchyard where the sand blows across the walls, Clara lay buried. It seemed as if Jürgen knew nothing of this—it did not come within the compass of his thoughts, which comprised only fragments of a past time. Every Sunday he went with the old people to church, and sat silent there with vacant gaze. One day, while the Psalms were being sung, he uttered a deep sigh, and his eyes gleamed: they were fixed upon the altar, upon the place where he had knelt with his friend who was dead. He uttered her name, and became pale as death, and tears rolled over his cheeks.

They led him out of the church; and he said to the bystanders that he was well, and had never been ill: he, the heavily afflicted, the waif cast forth upon the world, remembered nothing of his sufferings. And the Lord our Creator is wise and full of loving-kindness—who can doubt it?

In Spain, where the warm breezes blow over the Moorish cupola, among the orange trees and laurels, where song and the sound of castagnettes are always heard, sat in the sumptuous house a childish old man, the richest merchant in the place, while children marched in procession through the streets, with waving flags and lighted tapers. How much of his wealth would the old man not have given to be able to press his children to his heart! his daughter, or her child, that had perhaps never seen the light in this world, far less a Paradise.

"Poor child!"

Yes, poor child—a child still, and yet more than thirty years old; for to that age Jürgen had attained in Old Skjagen.

The drifting sand had covered the graves in the churchyard quite up to the walls of the church; but yet the dead must be buried among their relations and loved ones who had gone before them. Merchant Brönne and his wife now rested here with their children, under the white sand.

It was spring-time, the season of storms. The sand-hills whirled up in clouds, and the sea ran high, and flocks of birds flew like clouds in the storms, shrieking across the dunes; and shipwreck followed shipwreck on the reefs of "Skjagenzweig" from towards the Hunsby dunes. One evening Jürgen was sitting alone in the room. Suddenly his mind seemed to become clearer, and a feeling of unrest came upon

him, which in his younger years had often driven him forth upon the heath and the sand-hills.

"Home! home!" he exclaimed. No one heard him. He went out of the house towards the dunes. Sand and stones blew into his face and whirled around him. He went on farther and farther, towards the church: the sand lay high around the walls, half over the windows; but the heap had been shovelled away from the door, and the entrance was free and easy to open; and Jürgen went into the church.

The storm went howling over the town of Skjagen. Within the memory of man the sea had not run so high—a terrible tempest! but Jürgen was in the temple of God, and while black night reigned without, a light arose in his soul, a light that was never to be extinguished; he felt the heavy stone which seemed to weigh upon his head burst asunder. He thought he heard the sound of the organ, but it was the storm and the moaning of the sea. He sat down on one of the seats; and behold, the candles were lighted up one by one; a richness was displayed such as he had only seen in the church in Spain; and all the pictures of the old councillors were endued with life, and stepped forth from the walls against which they had stood for centuries, and seated themselves in the entrance of the church. The gates and doors flew open, and in came all the dead people, festively clad, and sat down to the sound of beautiful music, and filled the seats in the church. Then the psalm tune rolled forth like a sounding sea; and his old foster-parents from the Hunsby dunes were here, and the old merchant Brönne and his wife; and at their side, close to Jürgen, sat their friendly, lovely daughter Clara, who gave her hand to Jürgen, and they both went to the altar, where they had once knelt together, and the priest joined their hands and joined them together for life. Then the sound of music was heard again, wonderful, like a child's voice full of joy and expectation, and it swelled on to an organ's sound, to a tempest of full, noble sounds, lovely and elevating to hear, and yet strong enough to burst the stone tombs.

And the little ship that hung down from the roof of the choir came down, and became wonderfully large and beautiful, with silken sails and golden yards, "and every rope wrought through with silk," as the old song said. The married pair went on board, and the whole congregation with them, for there was room and joyfulness for all. And the walls and arches of the church bloomed like the juniper and the fragrant lime trees, and the leaves and branches waved and distributed coolness; then they bent and parted, and the ship sailed through the midst of them, through the sea, and through the air; and every church taper

became a star, and the wind sang a psalm tune, and all sang with the wind:

"In love, to glory—no life shall be lost. Full of blessedness and joy. Hallelujah!"

And these words were the last that Jürgen spoke in this world. The thread snapped that bound the immortal soul, and nothing but a dead body lay in the dark church, around which the storm raged, covering it with loose sand.

The next morning was Sunday, and the congregation and their pastor went forth to the service. The road to church had heen heavy; the sand made the way almost impassable; and now, when they at last reached their goal, a great hill of sand was piled up before the entrance, and the church itself was buried. The priest spoke a short prayer, and said that God had closed the door of this house, and the congregation must go and build a new one for Him elsewhere.

So they sang a psalm under the open sky, and went back to their homes.

Jürgen was nowhere to be found in the town of Skjagen, or in the dunes, however much they sought for him. It was thought that the waves, which had rolled far up on the sand, had swept him away.

His body lay buried in a great sepulchre, in the church itself. In the storm the Lord's hand had thrown a handful of earth on his grave; and the heavy mound of sand lay upon it, and lies there to this day.

The whirling sand had covered the high vaulted passages; white-thorn and wild rose trees grow over the church, over which the wanderer now walks; while the tower, standing forth like a gigantic tombstone over a grave, is to be seen for miles around: no king has a more splendid tombstone. No one disturbs the rest of the dead; no one knew of this, and we are the first who know of this grave—the storm sang the tale to me among the sand-hills.

THE BISHOP OF BÖRGLUM AND HIS WARRIORS.

Our scene is in Northern Jutland, in the so called "wild moor." We hear what is called the "Wester-wow-wow"—the peculiar roar of the North Sea as it breaks against the western coast of Jutland. It

rolls and thunders with a sound that penetrates for miles into the land; and we are quite near the roaring. Before us rises a great mound of sand — a mountain we have long seen, and towards which we are wending our way, driving slowly along through the deep sand. On this mountain of sand is a lofty old building — the convent of Börglum. In one of its wings (the larger one) there is still a church. And at this convent we now arrive in the late evening hour; but the weather is clear in the bright June night around us. The eye can range far, far over field and moor to the bay of Aalborg, over heath and meadow, and far across the dark blue sea.

Now we are there, and roll past between barns and other farm buildings; and at the left of the gate we turn aside to the old Castle Farm, where the lime trees stand in lines along the walls, and, sheltered from the wind and weather, grow so luxuriously that their twigs and leaves almost conceal the windows.

We mount the winding staircase of stone, and march through the long passages under the heavy roof-beams. The wind moans very strangely here, both within and without. It is hardly known how, but people say — yes, people say a great many things when they are frightened or want to frighten others — they say that the old dead choir-men glide silently past us into the church, where mass is sung. They can be heard in the rushing of the storm, and their singing brings up strange thoughts in the hearers — thoughts of the old times into which we are carried back.

On the coast a ship is stranded; and the bishop's warriors are there, and spare not those whom the sea has spared. The sea washes away the blood that has flowed from cloven skulls. The stranded goods belong to the bishop, and there is a store of goods here. The sea casts up tubs and barrels filled with costly wine for the convent cellar; and in the convent is already good store of beer and mead. There is plenty in the kitchen — dead game and poultry, hams and sausages; and fat fish swim in the ponds without.

The Bishop of Börglum is a mighty lord. He has great possessions, but still he longs for more — everything must bow before the mighty Olaf Glob. His rich cousin at Thyland is dead, and his widow is to have the rich inheritance. But how comes it that one relation is always harder towards another than even strangers would be? The widow's husband had possessed all Thyland, with the exception of the Church property. Her son was not at home. In his boyhood he had already started on a journey, for his desire was to see foreign lands and strange people. For years there had been no news of him. Perhaps he had

long been laid in the grave, and would never come back to his home to rule where his mother then ruled.

"What has a woman to do with rule?" said the bishop.

He summoned the widow before a court; but what did he gain thereby? The widow had never been disobedient to the law, and was strong in her just rights.

Bishop Olaf, of Börglum, what dost thou purpose? What writest thou on yonder smooth parchment, sealing it with thy seal, and intrusting it to the horsemen and servants, who ride away—far away—to the city of the Pope?

It is the time of falling leaves and of stranded ships, and soon icy winter will come.

Twice had icy winter returned before the bishop welcomed the horsemen and servants back to their home. They came from Rome with a papal decree—a ban, or bull, against the widow who had dared to offend the pious bishop. "Cursed be she, and all that belongs to her. Let her be expelled from the congregation and the Church. Let no man stretch forth a helping hand to her, and let friends and relations avoid her as a plague and a pestilence!"

"What will not bend must break," said the Bishop of Börglum.

And all forsake the widow; but she holds fast to her God. He is her helper and defender.

One servant only—an old maid—remained faithful to her; and, with the old servant, the widow herself followed the plough; and the crop grew, though the land had been cursed by the Pope and the bishop.

"Thou child of hell, I will yet carry out my purpose!" cries the Bishop of Börglum. "Now will I lay the hand of the Pope upon thee, to summon thee before the tribunal that shall condemn thee!"

Then did the widow yoke the two last oxen that remained to her to a waggon, and mounted upon the waggon, with her old servant, and travelled away across the heath out of the Danish land. As a stranger she came into a foreign country, where a strange tongue was spoken and where new customs prevailed. Farther and farther she journeyed, to where green hills rise into mountains, and the vine clothes their sides. Strange merchants drive by her, and they look anxiously after their waggons laden with merchandise. They fear an attack from the armed followers of the robber-knights. The two poor women, in their humble vehicle drawn by two black oxen, travel fearlessly through the dangerous sunken road and through the darksome forest. And now they were in Franconia. And there met them a stalwart knight, with a train of

JENS GLOB MEETS HIS MOTHER.

twelve armed followers. He paused, gazed at the strange vehicle, and questioned the women as to the goal of their journey and the place

whence they came. Then one of them mentioned Thyland, in Denmark, and spoke of her sorrows — of her woes — which were soon to cease; for so Divine Providence had willed it. For the stranger knight is the widow's son. He seized her hand, he embraced her, and the mother wept. For years she had not been able to weep, but had only bitten her lips till the blood started.

It is the time of falling leaves and of stranded ships, and soon will icy winter come.

The sea rolled wine-tubs to the shore for the bishop's cellar. In the kitchen the deer roasted on the spit before the fire. At Börglum it was warm and cheerful in the heated rooms, while cold winter raged without, when a piece of news was brought to the bishop: "Jens Glob, of Thyland, has come back, and his mother with him." Jens Glob laid a complaint against the bishop, and summoned him before the temporal and the spiritual court.

"That will avail him little," said the bishop. "Best leave off thy efforts, knight Jens."

Again it is the time of falling leaves, of stranded ships — icy winter comes again, and the "white bees" are swarming, and sting the traveller's face till they melt.

"Keen weather to-day," say the people, as they step in.

Jens Glob stands so deeply wrapped in thought that he singes the skirt of his wide garment.

"Thou Börglum bishop," he exclaims, "I shall subdue thee after all! Under the shield of the Pope, the law cannot reach thee; but Jens Glob shall reach thee!"

Then he writes a letter to his brother-in-law, Olaf Hase, in Sallingland, and prays that knight to meet him on Christmas Eve, at mass, in the church at Widberg. The bishop himself is to read the mass, and consequently will journey from Börglum to Thyland; and this is known to Jens Glob.

Moorland and meadow are covered with ice and snow. The marsh will bear horse and rider, the bishop with his priests, and armed men. They ride the shortest way, through the waving reeds, where the wind moans sadly.

Blow thy brazen trumpet, thou trumpeter clad in foxskin! it sounds merrily in the clear air. So they ride on over heath and moorland — over what is the garden of Fata Morgana in the hot summer, though now icy, like all the country — towards the church of Widberg.

The wind is blowing his trumpet too — blowing it harder and harder. He blows up a storm — a terrible storm — that increases more and

more. Towards the church they ride, as fast as they may through the storm. The church stands firm, but the storm careers on over field and moorland, over land and sea.

Börglum's bishop reaches the church; but Olaf Hase will scarce do so, hard as he may ride. He journeys with his warriors on the farther side of the bay, to help Jens Glob, now that the bishop is to be summoned before the judgment seat of the Highest.

The church is the judgment hall; the altar is the council table. The lights burn clear in the heavy brass candelabra. The storm reads out the accusation and the sentence, roaming in the air over moor and heath, and over the rolling waters. No ferry-boat can sail over the bay in such weather as this.

Olaf Hase makes halt at Ottesworde. There he dismisses his warriors, presents them with their horses and harness, and gives them leave to ride home and greet his wife. He intends to risk his life alone in the roaring waters; but they are to bear witness for him that it is not his fault if Jens Glob stands without reinforcement in the church at Widberg. The faithful warriors will not leave him, but follow him out into the deep waters. Ten of them are carried away; but Olaf Hase and two of the youngest men reach the farther side. They have still four miles to ride.

It is past midnight. It is Christmas. The wind has abated. The church is lighted up; the gleaming radiance shines through the window-frames, and pours out over meadow and heath. The mass has long been finished, silence reigns in the church, and the wax is heard dropping from the candles to the stone pavement. And now Olaf Hase arrives.

In the forecourt Jens Glob greets him kindly, and says,

"I have just made an agreement with the bishop."

"Sayest thou so?" replied Olaf Hase. "Then neither thou nor the bishop shall quit this church alive."

And the sword leaps from the scabbard, and Olaf Hase deals a blow that makes the panel of the church-door, which Jens Glob hastily closes between them, fly in fragments.

"Hold, brother! First hear what the agreement was that I made. I have slain the bishop and his warriors and priests. They will have no word more to say in the matter, nor will I speak again of all the wrong that my mother has endured."

The long wicks of the altar lights glimmer red; but there is a redder gleam upon the pavement, where the bishop lies with cloven skull, and his dead warriors around him, in the quiet of the holy Christmas night.

And four days afterwards the bells toll for a funeral in the convent of

Börglum. The murdered bishop and the slain warriors and priests are displayed under a black canopy, surrounded by candelabra decked with crape. There lies the dead man, in the black cloak wrought with silver; the crosier in the powerless hand that was once so mighty. The incense rises in clouds, and the monks chant the funeral hymn. It sounds like a wail — it sounds like a sentence of wrath and condemnation that must be heard far over the land, carried by the wind — sung by the wind — the wail that sometimes is silent, but never dies; for ever again it rises in song, singing even into our own time this legend of the Bishop of Börglum and his hard nephew. It is heard in the dark night by the frightened husbandman, driving by in the heavy sandy road past the convent of Börglum. It is heard by the sleepless listener in the thickly-walled rooms at Börglum. And not only to the ear of superstition is the sighing and the tread of hurrying feet audible in the long echoing passages leading to the convent-door that has long been locked. The door still seems to open, and the lights seem to flame in the brazen candlesticks; the fragrance of incense arises; the church gleams in its ancient splendour; and the monks sing and say the mass over the slain bishop, who lies there in the black silver-embroidered mantle, with the crozier in his powerless hand; and on his pale proud forehead gleams the red wound like fire, and there burn the worldly mind and the wicked thoughts.

Sink down into his grave — into oblivion — ye terrible shapes of the times of old!

Hark to the raging of the angry wind, sounding above the rolling sea. A storm approaches without, calling aloud for human lives. The sea has not put on a new mind with the new time. This night it is a horrible pit to devour up lives, and to-morrow, perhaps, it may be a glassy mirror — even as in the old time that we have buried. Sleep sweetly, if thou canst sleep!

Now it is morning.

The new time flings sunshine into the room. The wind still keeps up mightily. A wreck is announced — as in the old time.

During the night, down yonder by Lökken, the little fishing village with the red-tiled roofs — we can see it up here from the window — a ship has come ashore. It has struck, and is fast imbedded in the sand; but the rocket apparatus has thrown a rope on board, and formed a bridge from the wreck to the mainland; and all on board were saved, and reached the land, and were wrapped in warm blankets; and to-day they are invited to the farm at the convent of Börglum. In comfortable

rooms they encounter hospitality and friendly faces. They are addressed in the language of their country, and the piano sounds for them with melodies of their native land; and before these have died away, and the chord has been struck, the wire of thought, that reaches to the land of the sufferers, announces that they are rescued. Then their anxieties are dispelled; and at even they join in the dance at the feast given in the great hall at Börglum. Waltzes and Styrian dances are given, and Danish popular songs, and melodies of foreign lands in these modern times.

Blessed be thou, new time! Speak thou of summer and of purer gales! Send thy sunbeams gleaming into our hearts and thoughts! On thy glowing canvas let them be painted — the dark legends of the rough hard times that are past!

THE SNOW MAN.

"It 's so wonderfully cold that my whole body crackles!" said the Snow Man. "This is a kind of wind that can blow life into one; and how the gleaming one up yonder is staring at me." He meant the sun, which was just about to set. "It shall not make *me* wink—I shall manage to keep the pieces."

He had two triangular pieces of tile in his head instead of eyes. His mouth was made of an old rake, and consequently was furnished with teeth.

He had been born amid the joyous shouts of the boys, and welcomed by the sound of sledge bells and the slashing of whips.

The sun went down, and the full moon rose, round, large, clear, and beautiful in the blue air.

"There it comes again from the other side," said the Snow Man. He intended to say the sun is showing himself again. "Ah! I have cured him of staring. Now let him hang up there and shine, that I may see myself. If I only knew how I could manage to move from this place, I should like so much to move. If I could, I would slide along yonder on the ice, just as I see the boys slide; but I don't understand it; I don't know how to run."

"Away! away!" barked the old Yard Dog. He was quite hoarse, and could not pronounce the genuine "bow, wow." He had got the

hoarseness from the time when he was an indoor dog, and lay by the fire. "The sun will teach you to run! I saw that last winter, in your predecessor, and before that in *his* predecessor. Away! away!—and away they all go."

"I don't understand you, comrade," said the Snow Man. "That thing up yonder is to teach me to run?" He meant the moon. "Yes, it was running itself, when I saw it a little while ago, and now it comes creeping from the other side."

"You know nothing at all," retorted the Yard Dog. "But then you've only just been patched up. What you see yonder is the moon, and the one that went before was the sun. It will come again to-morrow, and will teach you to run down into the ditch by the wall. We shall soon have a change of weather; I can feel that in my left hind leg, for it pricks and pains me: the weather is going to change."

"I don't understand him," said the Snow Man; "but I have a feeling that he's talking about something disagreeable. The one who stared so just now, and whom he called the sun, is not my friend. I can feel that too."

"Away! away!" barked the Yard Dog; and he turned round three times, and then crept into his kennel to sleep.

The weather really changed. Towards morning, a thick damp fog lay over the whole region; later there came a wind, an icy wind. The cold seemed quite to seize upon one; but when the sun rose, what splendour! Trees and bushes were covered with hoar frost, and looked like a complete forest of coral, and every twig seemed covered with gleaming white buds. The many delicate ramifications, concealed in summer by the wreath of leaves, now made their appearance: it seemed like a lace-work, gleaming white. A snowy radiance sprang from every twig. The birch waved in the wind—it had life, like the rest of the trees in summer. It was wonderfully beautiful. And when the sun shone, how it all gleamed and sparkled, as if diamond dust had been strewn everywhere, and big diamonds had been dropped on the snowy carpet of the earth! or one could imagine that countless little lights were gleaming, whiter than even the snow itself.

"That is wonderfully beautiful," said a young girl, who came with a young man into the garden. They both stood still near the Snow Man, and contemplated the glittering trees. "Summer cannot show a more beautiful sight," said she; and her eyes sparkled.

"And we can't have such a fellow as this in summer-time," replied the young man, and he pointed to the Snow Man. "He is capital."

The girl laughed, nodded at the Snow Man, and then danced away

over the snow with her friend—over the snow that cracked and crackled under her tread as if she were walking on starch.

"Who were those two?" the Snow Man inquired of the Yard Dog. "You 've been longer in the yard than I. Do you know them?"

"Of course I know them," replied the Yard Dog. "She has stroked me, and he has thrown me a meat bone. I don't bite those two."

"But what are they?" asked the Snow Man.

"Lovers!" replied the Yard Dog. "They will go to live in the same kennel, and gnaw at the same bone. Away! away!"

THE SNOW MAN AND THE YARD DOG.

"Are they the same kind of beings as you and I?" asked the Snow Man.

Why, they belong to the master," retorted the Yard Dog. "People certainly know very little who were only born yesterday. I can see that in you. I have age, and information. I know every one here in the house, and I know a time when I did not lie out here in the cold, fastened to a chain. Away! away!"

"The cold is charming," said the Snow Man. "Tell me, tell me.—But you must not clank with your chain, for it jars within me when you do that."

"Away! away!" barked the Yard Dog. "They told me I was a pretty

little fellow: then I used to lie in a chair covered with velvet, up in master's house, and sit in the lap of the mistress of all. They used to kiss my nose, and wipe my paws with an embroidered handkerchief. I was called 'Ami—dear Ami— sweet Ami.' But afterwards I grew too big for them, and they gave me away to the housekeeper. So I came to live in the basement storey. You can look into that from where you are standing, and you can see into the room where I was master; for I was master at the housekeeper's. It was certainly a smaller place than upstairs, but I was more comfortable, and was not continually taken hold of and pulled about by children as I had been. I received just as good food as ever, and even better. I had my own cushion, and there was a stove, the finest thing in the world at this season. I went under the stove, and could lie down quite beneath it. Ah! I still dream of that stove. Away! away!"

"Does a stove look so beautiful?" asked the Snow Man. "Is it at all like me?"

"It's just the reverse of you. It's as black as a crow, and has a long neck and a brazen drum. It eats firewood, so that the fire spurts out of its mouth. One must keep at its side, or under it, and there one is very comfortable. You can see it through the window from where you stand."

And the Snow Man looked and saw a bright polished thing with a brazen drum, and the fire gleamed from the lower part of it. The Snow Man felt quite strangely: an odd emotion came over him, he knew not what it meant, and could not account for it; but all people who are not snow men know the feeling.

"And why did you leave her?" asked the Snow Man, for it seemed to him that the stove must be of the female sex. "How could you quit such a comfortable place?"

"I was obliged," replied the Yard Dog. "They turned me out of doors, and chained me up here. I had bitten the youngest young master in the leg, because he kicked away the bone I was gnawing. 'Bone for bone,' I thought. They took that very much amiss, and from that time I have been fastened to a chain and have lost my voice. Don't you hear how hoarse I am? Away! away! I can't talk any more like other dogs. Away! away! that was the end of the affair."

But the Snow Man was no longer listening to him. He was looking in at the housekeeper's basement lodging, into the room where the stove stood on its four iron legs, just the same size as the Snow Man himself.

"What a strange crackling within me!" he said. "Shall I ever get in there? It is an innocent wish, and our innocent wishes are certain to

be fulfilled. I must go in there and lean against her, even if I have to break through the window."

"You will never get in there," said the Yard Dog; "and if you approach the stove you 'll melt away—away!"

"I am as good as gone," replied the Snow Man. "I think I am breaking up."

The whole day the Snow Man stood looking in through the window. In the twilight hour the room became still more inviting: from the stove came a mild gleam, not like the sun nor like the moon; no, it was only as the stove can glow when he has something to eat. When the room-door opened, the flame started out of his mouth; this was a habit the stove had. The flame fell distinctly on the white face of the Snow Man, and gleamed red upon his bosom.

"I can endure it no longer," said he; "how beautiful it looks when it stretches out its tongue!"

The night was long; but it did not appear long to the Snow Man, who stood there lost in his own charming reflections, crackling with the cold.

In the morning the window-panes of the basement lodging were covered with ice. They bore the most beautiful ice-flowers that any snow man could desire; but they concealed the stove. The window-panes would not thaw; he could not see the stove, which he pictured to himself as a lovely female being. It crackled and whistled in him and around him; it was just the kind of frosty weather a snow man must thoroughly enjoy. But he did not enjoy it; and, indeed, how could he enjoy himself when he was stove-sick?

"That 's a terrible disease for a Snow Man," said the Yard Dog. "I have suffered from it myself, but I got over it. Away! away!" he barked; and he added, "the weather is going to change."

And the weather did change; it began to thaw.

The warmth increased, and the Snow Man decreased. He said nothing and made no complaint—and that 's an infallible sign.

One morning he broke down. And behold, where he had stood, something like a broomstick remained sticking up out of the ground. It was the pole round which the boys had built him up.

"Ah! now I can understand why he had such an intense longing," said the Yard Dog. "Why, there 's a shovel for cleaning out the stove fastened to the pole. The Snow Man had a stove-rake in his body, and that 's what moved within him. Now he has got over that too. Away! away!"

And soon they had got over the winter.

"Away! away!" barked the hoarse Yard Dog; but the girls in the house sang:

"Green thyme! from your house come out;
Willow, your woolly fingers stretch out;
Lark and cuckoo cheerfully sing,
For in February is coming the spring.
And with the cuckoo I'll sing too,
Come thou, dear sun, come out, cuckoo!"

And nobody thought any more of the Snow Man.

TWO MAIDENS.

Have you ever seen a maiden? I mean what our paviours call a maiden, a thing with which they ram down the paving-stones in the roads. A maiden of this kind is made altogether of wood, broad below, and girt round with iron rings; at the top she is narrow, and has a stick passed across through her waist; and this stick forms the arms of the maiden.

In the shed stood two maidens of this kind. They had their place among shovels, hand-carts, wheelbarrows, and measuring tapes; and to all this company the news had come that the maidens were no longer to be called "maidens," but "hand-rammers;" which word was the newest and the only correct designation among the paviours for the thing we all know from the old times by the name of "the maiden."

Now, there are among us human creatures certain individuals who are known as "emancipated women;" as, for instance, principals of institutions, dancers who stand professionally on one leg, milliners, and sick nurses; and with this class of emancipated women the two maidens in the shed associated themselves. They were "maidens" among the paviour folk, and determined not to give up this honourable appellation and let themselves be miscalled rammers.

"Maiden is a human name, but hand-rammer is a *thing*, and we won't be called *things*—that's insulting us."

"My lover would be ready to give up his engagement," said the youngest, who was betrothed to a paviour's hammer; and the hammer is the thing which drives great piles into the earth, like a machine, and therefore does on a large scale what ten maidens effect in a smaller

way. "He wants to marry me as a maiden, but whether he would have me, were I a hand-rammer, is a question; so I won't have my name changed."

"And I," said the elder one, "would rather have both my arms broken off."

But the wheelbarrow was of a different opinion; and the wheelbarrow was looked upon as of some consequence, for he considered himself a quarter of a coach, because he went about upon one wheel.

"I must submit to your notice," he said, "that the name 'maiden' is common enough, and not nearly so refined as 'hand-rammer,' or 'stamper,' which latter has also been proposed, and through which you would be introduced into the category of seals; and only think of the great stamp of state, which impresses the royal seal that gives effect to the laws! No, in your case I would surrender my maiden name."

"No, certainly not!" exclaimed the elder. "I am too old for that."

"I presume you have never heard of what is called 'European necessity?'" observed the honest Measuring Tape. "One must be able to adapt oneself to time and circumstances, and if there is a law that the 'maiden' is to be called 'hand-rammer,' why, she must be called 'hand-rammer,' and no pouting will avail, for everything has its measure."

"No; if there must be a change," said the younger, "I should prefer to be called 'Missy,' for that reminds one a little of maidens."

"But I would rather be chopped to chips," said the elder.

At last they all went to work. The maidens rode—that is, they were put in a wheelbarrow, and that was a distinction; but still they were called "hand-rammers." "Mai——!" they said, as they were bumped upon the pavement. "Mai——!" and they were very nearly pronouncing the whole word "maiden;" but they broke off short, and swallowed the last syllable; for after mature deliberation they considered it beneath their dignity to protest. But they always called each other "maiden," and praised the good old days in which everything had been called by its right name, and those who were maidens were called maidens. And they remained as they were; for the hammer really broke off his engagement with the younger one, for nothing would suit him but he must have a maiden for his bride.

THE FARMYARD COCK AND THE WEATHERCOCK.

THERE were two Cocks — one on the dunghill, the other on the roof. Both were conceited; but which of the two effected most? Tell us your opinion; but we shall keep our own nevertheless.

The poultry-yard was divided by a partition of boards from another yard, in which lay a manure-heap, whereon lay and grew a great Cucumber, which was fully conscious of being a forcing-bed plant.

"That 's a privilege of birth," the Cucumber said to herself. "Not all can be born cucumbers; there must be other kinds too. The fowls, the ducks, and all the cattle in the neighbouring yard are creatures too. I now look up to the Yard Cock on the partition. He certainly is of much greater consequence than the Weathercock, who is so highly placed, and who can't even creak, much less crow; and he has neither hens nor chickens, and thinks only of himself, and perspires verdigris. But the Yard Cock—he 's something like a cock! His gait is like a dance, his crowing is music; and wherever he comes, it is known directly. What a trumpeter he is! If he would only come in here! Even if he were to eat me up, stalk and all, it would be a blissful death," said the Cucumber.

In the night the weather became very bad. Hens, chickens, and even the Cock himself sought shelter. The wind blew down the partition between the two yards with a crash; the tiles came tumbling down, but the Weathercock sat firm. He did not even turn round; he could not turn round, and yet he was young and newly cast, but steady and sedate. He had been "born old," and did not at all resemble the birds that fly beneath the vault of heaven, such as the sparrows and the swallows. He despised those, considering them piping birds of trifling stature — ordinary song birds. The pigeons, he allowed, were big and shining, and gleamed like mother-o'-pearl, and looked like a kind of weathercocks; but then they were fat and stupid, and their whole endeavour was to fill themselves with food. "Moreover, they are tedious things to converse with," said the Weathercock.

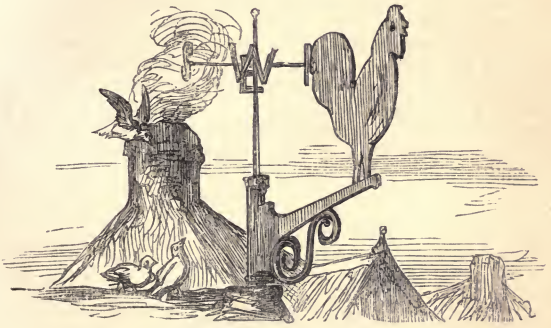
The birds of passage had also paid a visit to the Weathercock, and told him tales of foreign lands, of airy caravans, and exciting robber stories; of encounters with birds of prey; and that was interesting for the first time, but the Weathercock knew that afterwards they always repeated themselves, and that was tedious. "They are tedious, and

all is tedious," he said. "No one is fit to associate with, and one and all of them are wearisome and stupid."

"The world is worth nothing," he cried. "The whole thing is a stupidity."

The Weathercock was what is called "used up;" and that quality would certainly have made him interesting in the eyes of the Cucumber if she had known it; but she had only eyes for the Yard Cock, who had now actually come into her own yard.

The wind had blown down the plank, but the storm had passed over.



THE WEATHERCOCK.

"What do you think of *that* crowing?" the Yard Cock inquired of his hens and chickens. "It was a little rough—the elegance was wanting."

And hens and chickens stepped upon the muck-heap, and the Cock strutted to and fro on it like a knight.

"Garden plant!" he cried out to the Cucumber; and in this one word she understood his deep feeling, and forgot that he was pecking at her and eating her up—a happy death!

And the hens came, and the chickens came, and when one of them runs the rest run also; and they clucked and chirped, and looked at the Cock, and were proud that he was of their kind.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" he crowed. "The chickens will grow up large fowls if I make a noise in the poultry-yard of the world."

And hens and chickens clucked and chirped, and the Cock told them a great piece of news:

"A cock can lay an egg; and do you know what there is in that egg? In that egg lies a basilisk. No one can stand the sight of a basilisk. Men know that, and now you know it too — you know what is in me, and what a cock of the world I am."

And with this the Yard Cock flapped his wings, and made his comb swell up, and crowed again; and all of them shuddered — all the hens and the chickens; but they were proud that one of their people should be such a cock of the world. They clucked and chirped, so that the Weathercock heard it; and he heard it, but he never stirred.

"It 's all stupid stuff!" said a voice within the Weathercock. "The Yard Cock does not lay eggs, and I am too lazy to lay any. If I liked, I could lay a wind-egg; but the world is not worth a wind-egg. And now I don't like even to sit here any longer."

And with this the Weathercock broke off; but he did not kill the Yard Cock, though he intended to do so, as the hens declared. And what does the moral say? — "Better to crow than to be 'used up' and break off."

THE PEN AND INKSTAND.

In the room of a poet, where his inkstand stood upon the table, it was said, "It is wonderful what can come out of an inkstand. What will the next thing be? It is wonderful!"

"Yes, certainly," said the Inkstand. "It 's extraordinary — that 's what I always say," he exclaimed to the pen and to the other articles on the table that were near enough to hear. "It is wonderful what a number of things can come out of me. It 's quite incredible. And I really don't myself know what will be the next thing, when that man begins to dip into me. One drop out of me is enough for half a page of paper; and what cannot be contained in half a page? From me all the works of the poet go forth — all these living men, whom people can imagine they have met — all the deep feeling, the humour, the vivid pictures of nature. I myself don't understand how it is, for I am not acquainted with nature, but it certainly is in me. From me all these

things have gone forth, and from me proceed the troops of charming maidens, and of brave knights on prancing steeds, and all the lame and the blind, and I don't know what more — I assure you I don't think of anything."

"There you are right," said the Pen; "you don't think at all; for if you did, you would comprehend that you only furnish the fluid. You give the fluid, that I may exhibit upon the paper what dwells in me, and what I would bring to the day. It is the pen that writes. No man doubts that; and, indeed, most people have about as much insight into poetry as an old inkstand."

"You have but little experience," replied the Inkstand. "You 've hardly been in service a week, and are already half worn out. Do you fancy you are the poet? You are only a servant; and before you came I had many of your sort, some of the goose family, and others of English manufacture. I know the quill as well as the steel pen. Many have been in my service, and I shall have many more when *he* comes — the man who goes through the motions for me, and writes down what he derives from me. I should like to know what will be the next thing he 'll take out of me."

"Inkpot!" exclaimed the Pen.

Late in the evening the poet came home. He had been to a concert, where he had heard a famous violinist, with whose admirable peformances he was quite enchanted. The player had drawn a wonderful wealth of tone from the instrument: sometimes it had sounded like tinkling water-drops, like rolling pearls, sometimes like birds twittering in chorus, and then again it went swelling on like the wind through the fir trees. The poet thought he heard his own heart weeping, but weeping melodiously, like the sound of woman's voice. It seemed as though not only the strings sounded, but every part of the instrument. It was a wonderful performance; and difficult as the piece was, the bow seemed to glide easily to and fro over the strings, and it looked as though every one might do it. The violin seemed to sound of itself, and the bow to move of itself — those two appeared to do everything; and the audience forgot the master who guided them and breathed soul and spirit into them. The master was forgotten; but the poet remembered him, and named him, and wrote down his thoughts concerning the subject:

"How foolish it would be of the violin and the bow to boast of their achievements. And yet we men often commit this folly — the poet, the artist, the labourer in the domain of science, the general — we all do it. We are only the instruments which the Almighty uses: to Him alone be the honour! We have nothing of which we should be proud."

Yes, that is what the poet wrote down. He wrote it in the form of a parable, which he called "The Master and the Instruments."

"That is what you get, madam," said the Pen to the Inkstand, when the two were alone again. "Did you not hear him read aloud what I have written down?"

"Yes, what I gave you to write," retorted the Inkstand. "That was a cut at you, because of your conceit. That you should not even have understood that you were being quizzed! I gave you a cut from within me — surely I must know my own satire!"

"Ink-pipkin!" cried the Pen.

"Writing-stick!" cried the Inkstand.

And each of them felt a conviction that he had answered well; and it is a pleasing conviction to feel that one has given a good answer — a conviction on which one can sleep; and accordingly they slept upon it. But the poet did not sleep. Thoughts welled up from within him, like the tones from the violin, falling like pearls, rushing like the storm-wind through the forests. He understood his own heart in these thoughts, and caught a ray from the Eternal Master.

To *Him* be all the honour!

THE CHILD IN THE GRAVE.

THERE was mourning in the house, sorrow in every heart. The youngest child, a boy four years old, the joy and hope of his parents, had died. There still remained to them two daughters, the elder of whom was about to be confirmed—good, charming girls both; but the child that one has lost always seems the dearest; and here it was the youngest, and a son. It was a heavy trial. The sisters mourned as young hearts can, and were especially moved at the sight of their parents' sorrow. The father was bowed down, and the mother completely struck down by the great grief. Day and night she had been busy about the sick child, and had tended, lifted, and carried it; she had felt how it was a part of herself. She could not realize that the child was dead, and that it must be laid in a coffin and sleep in the ground. She thought God *could not* take this child from her; and when it was so, nevertheless, and there could be no more doubt on the subject, she said in her feverish pain:

"God did not know it. He has heartless servants here on earth, who do according to their own liking, and hear not the prayers of a mother."

In her grief she fell away from God, and then there came dark thoughts, thoughts of death, of everlasting death, that man was but dust in the dust, and that with this life all was ended. But these thoughts gave her no stay, nothing on which she could take hold; and she sank into the fathomless abyss of despair.

In her heaviest hours she could weep no more, and she thought not of the young daughters who were still left to her. The tears of her husband fell upon her forehead, but she did not look at him. Her thoughts were with the dead child; her whole thought and being were fixed upon it, to call back every remembrance of the little one, every innocent childish word it had uttered.

The day of the funeral came. For nights before the mother had not slept; but in the morning twilight she now slept, overcome by weariness; and in the meantime the coffin was carried into a distant room, and there nailed down, that she might not hear the blows of the hammer.

When she awoke, and wanted to see her child, the husband said,

"We have nailed down the coffin. It was necessary to do so."

"When God is hard towards me, how should men be better?" she said, with sobs and groans.

The coffin was carried to the grave. The disconsolate mother sat with her young daughters. She looked at her daughters, and yet did not see them, for her thoughts were no longer busy at the domestic hearth. She gave herself up to her grief, and grief tossed her to and fro as the sea tosses a ship without compass or rudder. So the day of the funeral passed away, and similar days followed, of dark, wearying pain. With moist eyes and mournful glances, the sorrowing daughters and the afflicted husband looked upon her who would not hear their words of comfort; and, indeed, what words of comfort could they speak to her, when they themselves were heavily bowed down?

It seemed as though she knew sleep no more; and yet he would now have been her best friend, who would have strengthened her body, and poured peace into her soul. They persuaded her to seek her couch, and she lay still there, like one who slept. One night her husband was listening, as he often did, to her breathing, and fully believed that she had now found rest and relief. He folded his arms and prayed, and soon sank into a deep healthy sleep; and thus he did not notice that his wife rose, threw on her clothes, and silently glided from the house, to go where her thoughts always lingered—to the grave which held her child. She stepped through the garden of the house, and over the fields, where

a path led to the churchyard. No one saw her on her walk—she had seen nobody, for her eyes was fixed upon the one goal of her journey.

It was a lovely starlight night; the air was still mild; it was in the beginning of September. She entered the churchyard, and stood by the little grave, which looked like a great nosegay of fragrant flowers. She sat down, and bowed her head low over the grave, as if she could have seen her child through the intervening earth, her little boy, whose smile rose so vividly before her—the gentle expression of whose eyes, even on the sick bed, she could never forget. How eloquent had that glance been, when she had bent over him, and seized his delicate hand, which he had no longer strength to raise! As she had sat by his crib, so she now sat by his grave, but here her tears had free course, and fell thick upon the grave.

"Thou wouldst gladly go down and be with thy child," said a voice quite close to her, a voice that sounded so clear and deep, it went straight to her heart. She looked up; and near her stood a man wrapped in a black cloak, with a hood drawn closely down over his face. But she glanced keenly up, and saw his face under his hood. It was stern, but yet awakened confidence, and his eyes beamed with the radiance of youth.

"Down to my child!" she repeated; and a despairing supplication spoke out of her words.

"Darest thou follow me?" asked the form. "I am Death."

And she bowed her head in acquiescence. Then suddenly it seemed as though all the stars were shining with the radiance of the full moon; she saw the varied colours of the flowers on the grave, and the covering of earth was gradually withdrawn like a floating drapery; and she sank down, and the apparition covered her with a black cloak; night closed around her, the night of death, and she sank deeper than the sexton's spade can penetrate; and the churchyard was as a roof over her head.

A corner of the cloak was removed, and she stood in a great hall which spread wide and pleasantly around. It was twilight. But in a moment her child appeared, and was pressed to her heart, smiling at her in greater beauty than he had ever possessed. She uttered a cry, but it was inaudible. A glorious swelling strain of music sounded in the distance, and then near to her, and then again in the distance: never had such tones fallen on her ear; they came from beyond the great dark curtain which separated the hall from the great land of eternity beyond.

"My sweet darling mother," she heard her child say. It was the well-known, much-loved voice, and kiss followed kiss in boundless felicity; and the child pointed to the dark curtain.

"It is not so beautiful on earth. Do you see, mother — do you see them all? Oh, that is happiness!"

But the mother saw nothing which the child pointed out—nothing but the dark night. She looked with earthly eyes, and could not see as the

THE MOTHER AT THE GRAVE.

child saw, which God had called to Himself. She could hear the sounds of the music, but she heard not the word—*the Word* in which she was to believe.

"Now I can fly, mother — I can fly with all the other happy children into the presence of the Almighty. I would fain fly; but, if you weep as you are weeping now, I might be lost to you—and yet I would

go so gladly. May I not fly? And you will come to me soon — will you not, dear mother?"

"Oh, stay! stay!" entreated the mother. "Only one moment more — only once more I should wish to look at thee, and kiss thee, and press thee in my arms."

And she kissed and fondled the child. Then her name was called from above — called in a plaintive voice. What might this mean?

"Hearest thou?" asked the child. "It is my father who calls thee."

And in a few moments deep sighs were heard, as of weeping children.

"They are my sisters," said the child. "Mother, you surely have not forgotten them?"

And then she remembered those she had left behind. A great terror came upon her. She looked out into the night, and above her dim forms were flitting past. She seemed to recognize a few more of these. They floated through the Hall of Death towards the dark curtain, and there they vanished. Would her husband and her daughter thus flit past? No, their sighs and lamentations still sounded from above:—and she had been nearly forgetting them for the sake of him who was dead!

"Mother, now the bells of heaven are ringing," said the child. "Mother, now the sun is going to rise."

And an overpowering light streamed in upon her. The child had vanished, and she was borne upwards. It became cold round about her, and she lifted up her head, and saw that she was lying in the churchyard, on the grave of her child.

But the Lord had been a stay unto her feet, in a dream, and a light to her spirit; and she bowed her knees and prayed for forgiveness that she had wished to keep back a soul from its immortal flight, and that she had forgotten her duties towards the living who were left to her.

And when she had spoken those words, it was as if her heart were lightened. Then the sun burst forth, and over her head a little bird sang out, and the church bells sounded for early service. Everything was holy around her, and her heart was chastened. She acknowledged the goodness of God, she acknowledged the duties she had to perform, and eagerly she went home. She bent over her husband, who still slept; her warm devoted kiss awakened him, and heart-felt words of love came from the lips of both. And she was gentle and strong, as a wife can be; and from her came the consoling words,

"God's will is always the best."

Then her husband asked her,

"From whence hast thou all at once derived this strength — this feeling of consolation?"

And she kissed him, and kissed her children, and said,

"They came from God, through the child in the grave."

SOUP ON A SAUSAGE-PEG.

I.

"THAT was a remarkably fine dinner yesterday," observed an old Mouse of the female sex to another who had not been at the festive gathering. "I sat number twenty-one from the old mouse king, so that I was not badly placed. Should you like to hear the order of the banquet? The courses were very well arranged—mouldy bread, bacon-rind, tallow candle, and sausage — and then the same dishes over again from the beginning: it was just as good as having two banquets in succession. There was as much joviality and agreeable jesting as in the family circle. Nothing was left but the pegs at the ends of the sausages. And the discourse turned upon these; and at last the expression, 'Soup on sausage-rinds,' or, as they have the proverb in the neighbouring country, 'Soup on a sausage-peg,' was mentioned. Every one had heard the proverb, but no one had ever tasted the sausage-peg soup, much less prepared it. A capital toast was drunk to the inventor of the soup, and it was said he deserved to be a relieving officer. Was not that witty? And the old mouse king stood up, and promised that the young female mouse who could best prepare that soup should be his queen; and a year was allowed for the trial."

"That was not at all bad," said the other Mouse; "but how does one prepare this soup?"

"Ah, how is it prepared? That is just what all the young female mice, and the old ones too, are asking. They would all very much like to be queen; but they don't want to take the trouble to go out into the world to learn how to prepare the soup, and that they would certainly have to do. But every one has not the gift of leaving the family circle and the chimney corner. In foreign parts one can't get cheese-rinds

and bacon every day. No, one must bear hunger, and perhaps be eaten up alive by a cat."

Such were probably the considerations by which the majority were deterred from going out into the wide world and gaining information. Only four mice announced themselves ready to depart. They were young and brisk, but poor. Each of them wished to proceed to one of the four quarters of the globe, and then it would become manifest which of them was favoured by fortune. Every one took a sausage-peg, so as to keep in mind the object of the journey. The stiff sausage-peg was to be to them as a pilgrim's staff.

It was at the beginning of May that they set out, and they did not return till the May of the following year; and then only three of them appeared. The fourth did not report herself, nor was there any intelligence of her, though the day of trial was close at hand.

"Yes, there's always some drawback in even the pleasantest affair," said the Mouse King.

And then he gave orders that all mice within a circuit of many miles should be invited. They were to assemble in the kitchen, where the three travelled mice would stand up in a row, while a sausage-peg, shrouded in crape, was set up as a memento of the fourth, who was missing. No one was to proclaim his opinion till the mouse king had settled what was to be said. And now let us hear.

II.

What the first little Mouse had seen and learnt in her travels.

"When I went out into the wide world," said the little Mouse, "I thought, as many think at my age, that I had already learnt everything: but that was not the case. Years must pass before one gets so far. I went to sea at once. I went in a ship that steered towards the north. They had told me that the ship's cook must know how to manage things at sea; but it is easy enough to manage things when one has plenty of sides of bacon, and whole tubs of salt pork, and mouldy flour. One has delicate living on board; but one does not learn to prepare soup on a sausage-peg. We sailed along for many days and nights; the ship rocked fearfully, and we did not get off without a wetting. When we at last reached the port to which we were bound, I left the ship; and it was high up in the far north.

"It is a wonderful thing, to go out of one's own corner at home, and

sail in a ship, where one has a sort of corner too, and then suddenly to find oneself hundreds of miles away in a strange land. I saw great pathless forests of pine and birch, which smelt so strong that I sneezed, and thought of sausage. There were great lakes there too. When I came close to them the waters were quite clear, but from a distance they looked black as ink. Great swans floated upon them: I thought at first they were spots of foam, they lay so still; but then I saw them walk and fly, and I recognized them. They belong to the goose family—one can see that by their walk; for no one can deny his parentage. I kept with my own kind. I associated with the forest and field mice, who, by the way, know very little, especially as regards cookery, though this was the very subject that had brought me abroad. The thought that soup might be boiled on a sausage-peg was such a startling statement to them, that it flew at once from mouth to mouth through the whole forest. They declared the problem could never be solved; and little did I think that there, in the very first night, I should be initiated into the method of its preparation. It was in the height of summer, and that, the mice said, was the reason why the wood smelt so strongly, and why the herbs were so fragrant, and the lakes so transparent and yet so dark, with their white swimming swans.

"On the margin of the wood, among three or four houses, a pole as tall as the mainmast of a ship had been erected, and from its summit hung wreaths and fluttering ribbons: this was called a maypole. Men and maids danced round the tree, and sang as loudly as they could, to the violin of the fiddler. There were merry doings at sundown and in the moonlight, but I took no part in them—what has a little mouse to do with a May dance? I sat in the soft moss and held my sausage-peg fast. The moon threw its beams especially upon one spot, where a tree stood, covered with moss so exceedingly fine, I may almost venture to say it was as fine as the skin of the mouse king; but it was of a green colour, and that is a great relief to the eye.

"All at once, the most charming little people came marching forth. They were only tall enough to reach to my knee. They looked like men, but were better proportioned: they called themselves elves, and had delicate clothes on, of flower leaves trimmed with the wings of flies and gnats, which had a very good appearance. Directly they appeared, they seemed to be seeking for something—I know not what; but at last some of them came towards me, and the chief pointed to my sausage-peg, and said, 'That is just such a one as we want—it is pointed—it is capital!' and the longer he looked at my pilgrim's staff the more delighted he became.

"'I will lend it,' I said, 'but not to keep.'

"'Not to keep!' they all repeated; and they seized the sausage-peg, which I gave up to them, and danced away to the spot where the fine moss grew; and here they set up the peg in the midst of the green. They wanted to have a maypole of their own, and the one they now had seemed cut out for them; and they decorated it so that it was beautiful to behold.

"First, little spiders spun it round with gold thread, and hung it all over with fluttering veils and flags, so finely woven, bleached so snowy white in the moonshine, that they dazzled my eyes. They took colours from the butterfly's wing, and strewed these over the white linen, and flowers and diamonds gleamed upon it, so that I did not know my sausage-peg again: there is not in all the world such a maypole as they had made of it. And now came the real great party of elves. They were quite without clothes, and looked as genteel as possible; and they invited me to be present at the feast; but I was to keep at a certain distance, for I was too large for them.

"And now began such music! It sounded like thousands of glass bells, so full, so rich, that I thought the swans were singing. I fancied also that I heard the voice of the cuckoo and the blackbird, and at last the whole forest seemed to join in. I heard children's voices, the sound of bells, and the song of birds; the most glorious melodies — and all came from the elves' maypole, namely, my sausage-peg. I should never have believed that so much could come out of it; but that depends very much upon the hands into which it falls. I was quite touched. I wept, as a little mouse may weep, with pure pleasure.

"The night was far too short; but it is not longer up yonder at that season. In the morning dawn the breeze began to blow, the mirror of the forest lake was covered with ripples, and all the delicate veils and flags fluttered away in the air. The waving garlands of spider's web, the hanging bridges and balustrades, and whatever else they are called, flew away as if they were nothing at all. Six elves brought me back my sausage-peg, and asked me at the same time if I had any wish that they could gratify; so I asked them if they could tell me how soup was made on a sausage-peg.

"'How *we* do it?' asked the chief of the elves, with a smile. 'Why, you have just seen it. I fancy you hardly knew your sausage-peg again?'

"'You only mean that as a joke,' I replied. And then I told them in so many words, why I had undertaken a journey, and what great hopes were founded on the operation at home. 'What advantage,' I

THE ELVES APPLY FOR THE LOAN OF THE SAUSAGE-PEG.

asked, 'can accrue to our mouse king, and to our whole powerful state, from the fact of my having witnessed all this festivity? I cannot shake it out of the sausage-peg, and say, "Look, here is the peg, now the soup will come." That would be a dish that could only be put on the table when the guests had dined.'

"Then the elf dipped his little finger into the cup of a blue violet, and said to me:

"'See here! I will anoint your pilgrim's staff; and when you go back to your country, and come to the castle of the mouse king, you have but to touch him with the staff, and violets will spring forth and cover its whole surface, even in the coldest winter-time. And so I think I've given you something to carry home, and a little more than something!'

But before the little Mouse said what this "something more" was, she stretched her staff out towards the king, and in very truth the most beautiful bunch of violets burst forth; and the scent was so powerful, that the mouse king incontinently ordered the mice who stood nearest the chimney to thrust their tails into the fire and create a smell of burning, for the odour of the violets was not to be borne, and was not of the kind he liked.

"But what was the 'something more,' of which you spoke?" asked the Mouse King.

"Why," the little Mouse answered, "I think it is what they call effect!" and herewith she turned the staff round, and lo! there was not a single flower to be seen upon it; she only held the naked skewer, and lifted this up, as a musical conductor lifts his *báton*.

"'Violets,' the elf said to me, 'are for sight, and smell, and touch. Therefore it yet remains to provide for hearing and taste!'" And now the little Mouse began to beat time; and music was heard, not such as sounded in the forest among the elves, but such as is heard in the kitchen. There was a bubbling sound of boiling and roasting; and all at once it seemed as if the sound were rushing through every chimney, and pots and kettles were boiling over. The fire-shovel hammered upon the brass kettle, and then, on a sudden, all was quiet again. They heard the quiet subdued song of the tea-kettle, and it was wonderful to hear —they could not quite tell if the kettle were beginning to sing or leaving off; and the little pot simmered, and the big pot simmered, and neither cared for the other: there seemed to be no reason at all in the pots. And the little Mouse flourished her *báton* more and more wildly; the pots foamed, threw up large bubbles, boiled over, and the wind roared and whistled through the chimney. Oh! it became so terrible, that the little Mouse lost her stick at last.

"That was a heavy soup!" said the Mouse King. "Shall we not soon hear about the preparation?"

"That was all," said the little Mouse, with a bow.

"That all! Then we should be glad to hear what the next has to relate," said the Mouse King.

III.

What the second little Mouse had to tell.

"I WAS born in the palace library," said the second Mouse. "I and several members of our family never knew the happiness of getting into the dining-room, much less into the store-room; on my journey, and here to-day, are the only times I have seen a kitchen. We have indeed often been compelled to suffer hunger in the library, but we got a good deal of knowledge. The rumour penetrated even to us, of the royal prize offered to those who could cook soup upon a sausage-peg; and it was my old grandmother who thereupon ferreted out a manuscript, which she certainly could not read, but which she had heard read out, and in which it was written: 'Those who are poets can boil soup upon a sausage-peg.' She asked me if I were a poet. I felt quite innocent on the subject, and then she told me I must go out, and manage to become one. I again asked what was requisite in that particular, for it was as difficult for me to find that out, as to prepare the soup; but grandmother had heard a good deal of reading, and she said that three things were especially necessary: 'Understanding, imagination, feeling—if you can manage to obtain these three, you are a poet, and the sausage-wide peg affair will be quite easy to you.'

"And I went forth, and marched towards the west, away into the world, to become a poet.

"Understanding is the most important thing in every affair. I knew that, for the two other things are not held in half such respect, and consequently I went out first to seek understanding. Yes, where does he dwell? 'Go to the ant and be wise,' said the great King of the Jews; I knew that from my library experience; and I never stopped till I come to the first great ant-hill, and there I placed myself on the watch, to become wise.

"The ants are a respectable people. They are understanding itself. Everything with them is like a well-worked sum, that comes right. To work and to lay eggs, they say, is to live while you live, and to provide for posterity; and accordingly that is what they do. They were divided into the clean and the dirty ants. The rank of each is indicated by a number, and the ant queen is number ONE; and her view is the only correct one, she is the receptacle of all wisdom; and that was important

for me to know. She spoke so much, and it was all so clever, that it sounded to me like nonsense. She declared her ant-hill was the loftiest thing in the world; though close by it grew a tree, which was certainly loftier, much loftier, that could not be denied, and therefore it was never mentioned. One evening an ant had lost herself upon the tree: she had crept up the stem—not up to the crown, but higher than any ant had climbed until then; and when she turned, and came back home, she talked of something far higher than the ant-hill that she had found in her travels; but the other ants considered that an insult to the whole community, and consequently she was condemned to wear a muzzle, and to continual solitary confinement. But a short time afterwards another ant got on the tree, and made the same journey and the same discovery; and this one spoke with emphasis, and indistinctly, they said; and as, moreover, she was one of the pure ants and very much respected, they believed her; and when she died they erected an egg-shell as a memorial of her, for they had a great respect for the sciences. I saw," continued the little Mouse, "that the ants were always running to and fro with their eggs on their backs. One of them once dropped her egg; she exerted herself greatly to pick it up again, but she could not succeed. Then two others came up, and helped her with all their might, insomuch that they nearly dropped their own eggs over it; but then they certainly at once relaxed their exertions, for each should think of himself first—the ant queen had declared that by so doing they exhibited at once heart and understanding.

"'These two qualities,' she said, 'place us ants on the highest step among all reasoning beings. Understanding is seen among us all in predominant measure, and I have the greatest share of understanding.' And so saying, she raised herself on her hind-legs, so that she was easily to be recognized. I could not be mistaken, and I ate her up. We were to go to the ants to learn wisdom—and I had got the queen!

"I now proceeded nearer to the before-mentioned lofty tree. It was an oak, and had a great trunk, and a far-spreading top, and was very old. I knew that a living being dwelt here, a Dryad as it is called, who is born with the tree, and dies with it. I had heard about this in the library; and now I saw an oak tree, and an oak girl. She uttered a piercing cry when she saw me so near. Like all females, she was very much afraid of mice; and she had more ground for fear than others, for I might have gnawed through the stem of the tree on which her life depended. I accosted the maiden in a friendly and honest way, and bade her take courage. And she took me up in her delicate hand; and

when I had told her my reason for coming out into the wide world, she promised me that perhaps on that very evening I should have one of the two treasures of which I was still in quest. She told me that Phantasus, the genius of imagination, was her very good friend, that he was beautiful as the god of love, and that he rested many an hour under the leafy boughs of the tree, which then rustled more strongly than ever over the pair of them. He called her his dryad, she said, and the tree his tree, for the grand gnarled oak was just to his taste, with its root burrowing so deep in the earth, and the stem and crown rising so high out in the fresh air, and knowing the beating snow, and the sharp wind, and the warm sunshine as they deserve to be known. 'Yes,' the Dryad continued, 'the birds sing aloft there in the branches, and tell each other of strange countries they have visited; and on the only dead bough the stork has built a nest which is highly ornamental, and moreover, one gets to hear something of the land of the pyramids. All that is very pleasing to Phantasus; but it is not enough for him: I myself must talk to him, and tell him of life in the woods, and must revert to my childhood, when I was little, and the tree such a delicate thing that a stinging-nettle overshadowed it—and I have to tell everything, till now that the tree is great and strong. Sit you down under the green thyme, and pay attention; and when Phantasus comes, I shall find an opportunity to pinch his wings, and to pull out a little feather. Take the pen—no better is given to any poet—and it will be enough for you!'

"And when Phantasus came the feather was plucked, and I seized it," said the little Mouse. "I put it in water, and held it there till it grew soft. It was very hard to digest, but I nibbled it up at last. It is very easy to gnaw oneself into being a poet, though there are many things one must do. Now I had these two things, imagination and understanding, and through these I knew that the third was to be found in the library; for a great man has said and written that there are romances, whose sole and single use is that they relieve people of their superfluous tears, and that they are, in fact, a sort of sponges sucking up human emotion. I remembered a few of these old books, which had always looked especially palatable, and were much thumbed and very greasy, having evidently absorbed a great deal of feeling into themselves.

"I betook myself back to the library, and, so to speak, devoured a whole novel—that is, the essence of it, the interior part, for I left the crust or binding. When I had digested this, and a second one in addition, I felt a stirring within me, and I ate a bit of a third romance, and

now I was a poet. I said so to myself, and told the others also. I had headache, and chestache, and I can't tell what aches besides. I began thinking what kind of stories could be made to refer to a sausage-peg; and many pegs, and sticks, and staves, and splinters came into my mind—the ant queen must have had a particularly fine understanding. I remembered the man who took a white stick in his mouth, by which means he could render himself and the stick invisible; I thought of stick hobby-horses, of 'stock rhymes,' of 'breaking the staff' over an offender, and Heaven knows of how many phrases more concerning sticks, stocks, staves, and pegs. All my thoughts ran upon sticks, staves, and pegs; and when one is a poet (and I am a poet, for I have worked most terribly hard to become one) a person can make poetry on these subjects. I shall therefore be able to wait upon you every day with a poem or a history—and that's the soup I have to offer."

"Let us hear what the third has to say," was now the Mouse King's command.

"Peep! peep!" cried a small voice at the kitchen-door, and a little mouse—it was the fourth of the mice who had contended for the prize, the one whom they looked upon as dead—shot in like an arrow. She toppled the sausage-peg with the crape covering over in a moment. She had been running day and night, and had travelled on the railway, in the goods train, having watched her opportunity, and yet she had almost come too late. She pressed forward, looking very much rumpled, and she had lost her sausage-peg, but not her voice, for she at once took up the word, as if they had been waiting only for her, and wanted to hear none but her, and as if everything else in the world were of no consequence. She spoke at once, and spoke fully: she had appeared so suddenly, that no one found time to object to her speech or to her, while she was speaking. And let us hear what she said.

IV.

What the fourth Mouse, who spoke before the third had spoken, had to tell.

"I BETOOK myself immediately to the largest town," she said; "the name has escaped me—I have a bad memory for names. From the railway I was carried, with some confiscated goods, to the council house, and when I arrived there I ran into the dwelling of the gaoler. The gaoler was talking of his prisoners, and especially of one who had

THE GAOLER'S GRANDDAUGHTER TAKES PITY ON THE LITTLE MOUSE.

spoken unconsidered words. These words had given rise to others, and these latter had been written down and recorded.

"'The whole thing is soup on a sausage-peg,' said the gaoler; 'but the soup may cost him his neck.'

"Now, this gave me an interest in the prisoner," continued the Mouse, "and I watched my opportunity and slipped into his prison—for there's a mouse-hole to be found behind every locked door. The prisoner looked pale, and had a great beard, and bright sparkling eyes. The lamp flickered and smoked, but the walls were so accustomed to that, that they grew none the blacker for it. The prisoner scratched pictures and verses in white upon the black ground, but I did not read

them. I think he found it tedious, and I was a welcome guest. He lured me with bread crumbs, with whistling, and with friendly words: he was glad to see me, and gradually I got to trust him, and we became good friends. He let me run upon his hand, his arm, and into his sleeve; he let me creep about in his beard, and called me his little friend. I really got to love him, for these things are reciprocal. I forgot my mission in the wide world, forgot my sausage-peg: that I had placed in a crack in the floor—it's lying there still. I wished to stay where I was, for if I went away, the poor prisoner would have no one at all, and that's having *too* little, in this world. *I* stayed, but *he* did not stay. He spoke to me very mournfully the last time, gave me twice as much bread and cheese as usual, and kissed his hand to me; then he went away, and never came back. I don't know his history.

"'Soup on a sausage-peg!' said the gaoler, to whom I now went; but I should not have trusted him. He took me in his hand, certainly, but he popped me into a cage, a treadmill. That's a horrible engine, in which you go round and round without getting any farther; and people laugh at you into the bargain.

"The gaoler's granddaughter was a charming little thing, with a mass of curly hair that shone like gold, and such merry eyes, and such a smiling mouth!

"'You poor little mouse,' she said, as she peeped into my ugly cage; and she drew out the iron rod, and forth I jumped, to the window board, and from thence to the roof spout. Free! free! I thought only of that, and not of the goal of my journey.

"It was dark, and night was coming on. I took up my quarters in an old tower, where dwelt a watchman and an owl. That is a creature like a cat, who has the great failing that she eats mice. But one may be mistaken, and so was I, for this was a very respectable, well-educated old owl: she knew more than the watchman, and as much as I. The young owls were always making a racket; but 'go and make soup on a sausage peg' were the hardest words she could prevail on herself to utter, she was so fondly attached to her family. Her conduct inspired me with so much confidence, that from the crack in which I was crouching I called out 'peep!' to her. This confidence of mine pleased her hugely, and she assured me I should be under her protection, and that no creature should be allowed to do me wrong; she would reserve me for herself, for the winter, when there would be short commons.

"She was in every respect a clever woman, and explained to me how the watchman could only 'whoop' with the horn that hung at his side, adding, 'He is terribly conceited about it, and imagines he's an owl in

the tower. Wants to do great things, but is very small — soup on a sausage-peg!' I begged the owl to give me the recipe for this soup, and then she explained the matter to me.

"'Soup on a sausage-peg,' she said, 'was only a human proverb, and was to be understood thus: Each thinks his own way the best, but the whole signifies nothing.'

"'Nothing!' I exclaimed. "I was quite struck. Truth is not always agreeable, but truth is above everything; and that's what the old owl said. I now thought about it, and readily perceived that if I brought what was *above everything* I brought something far beyond soup on a sausage-peg. So I hastened away, that I might get home in time, and bring the highest and best, that is above everything—namely, *the truth*. The mice are an enlightened people, and the king is above them all. He is capable of making me queen, for the sake of truth."

"Your truth is a falsehood," said the Mouse who had not yet spoken. "I can prepare the soup, and I mean to prepare it."

V.

How it was prepared.

"I DID not travel," the third Mouse said. "I remained in my country —that's the right thing to do. There's no necessity for travelling; one can get everything as good here. I stayed at home. I've not learnt what I know from supernatural beings, or gobbled it up, or held converse with owls. I have what I know through my own reflections. Will you make haste and put that kettle upon the fire? So—now water must be poured in—quite full—up to the brim!—So—now more fuel—make up the fire, that the water may boil—it must boil over and over!—So—I now throw the peg in. Will the king now be pleased to dip his tail in the boiling water, and to stir it round with the said tail? The longer the king stirs it, the more powerful will the soup become. It costs nothing at all—no further materials are necessary, only stir it round!"

"Cannot any one else do that?" asked the Mouse King.

"No;" replied the mouse. "The power is contained only in the tail of the Mouse King."

And the water boiled and bubbled, and the Mouse King stood close beside the kettle—there was almost danger in it—and he put forth his tail, as the mice do in the dairy, when they skim the cream from a pan

of milk, afterwards licking their creamy tails; but his tail only penetrated into the hot steam, and then he sprang hastily down from the hearth

"Of course—certainly you are my queen," he said. "We'll adjourn the soup question till our golden wedding in fifty years' time, so that the poor of my subjects, who will then be fed, may have something to which they can look forward with pleasure for a long time."

THE MOUSE KING UNDERSTANDS HOW THE SOUP IS MADE.

And soon the wedding was held. But many of the mice said, as they were returning home, that it could not be really called soup on a sausage-peg, but rather soup on a mouse's tail. They said that some of the stories had been very cleverly told; but the whole thing might have been different. "*I* should have told it so—and so—and so!"

Thus said the critics, who are always wise—after the fact.

And this story went out into the wide world, everywhere; and opinions varied concerning it, but the story remained as it was. And that's the best in great things and in small, so also with regard to soup on a sausage-peg—not to expect any thanks for it.

THE STONE OF THE WISE MEN.

Far away in the land of India, far away towards the East, at the end of the world, stood the Tree of the Sun, a noble tree, such as we have never seen, and shall probably never see. The crown stretched out several miles around: it was really an entire wood; each of its smallest branches formed, in its turn, a whole tree. Palms, beech trees, pines, plane trees, and various other kinds grew here, which are found scattered in all other parts of the world: they shot out like small branches from the great boughs, and these large boughs with their windings and knots formed, as it were, valleys and hills, clothed with velvety green, and covered with flowers. Everything was like a wide, blooming meadow, or like the most charming garden. Here the birds from all quarters of the world assembled together—birds from the primeval forests of America, the rose gardens of Damascus, from the deserts of Africa, in which the elephant and the lion boast of being the only rulers. The Polar birds came flying hither, and of course the stork and the swallow were not absent; but the birds were not the only living beings: the stag, the squirrel, the antelope, and a hundred other beautiful and light-footed animals were here at home. The crown of the tree was a wide-spread fragrant garden, and in the midst of it, where the great boughs raised themselves into a green hill, there stood a castle of crystal, with a view towards every quarter of heaven. Each tower was reared in the form of a lily. Through the stem one could ascend, for within it was a winding-stair; one could step out upon the leaves as upon balconies; and up in the calyx of the flower itself was the most beautiful, sparkling round hall, above which no other roof rose but the blue firmament with sun and stars.

Just as much splendour, though in another way, appeared below, in the wide halls of the castle. Here, on the walls, the whole world around was reflected. One saw everything that was done, so that there was no necessity of reading any papers, and indeed papers were not obtainable there. Everything was to be seen in living pictures, if one only wished to see it; for too much is still too much even for the wisest man; and this man dwelt here. His name is very difficult—you will not be able to pronounce it; therefore it may remain unmentioned. He knew everything that a man on earth can know, or can get to know; every invention which had already been or which was yet to be made was

known to him; but nothing more, for everything in the world has its limits. The wise King Solomon was only half as wise as he, and yet he was very wise, and governed the powers of nature, and held sway over potent spirits: yes, Death itself was obliged to give him every morning a list of those who were to die during the day. But King Solomon himself was obliged to die too; and this thought it was which often in the deepest manner employed the inquirer, the mighty lord in the castle on the Tree of the Sun. He also, however high he might tower above men in wisdom, must die one day. He knew that, and his children also must fade away like the leaves of the forest, and become dust. He saw the human race fade away like the leaves on the tree; saw new men come to fill their places; but the leaves that fell off never sprouted forth again—they fell to dust, or were transformed into other parts of plants. "What happens to man?" the wise man asked himself, "when the angel of death touches him? What may death be? The body is dissolved—and the soul. Yes, what is the soul? whither doth it go? To eternal life, says the comforting voice of religion; but what is the transition? where does one live, and how? Above, in heaven, says the pious man, thither we go. Thither?" repeated the wise man, and fixed his eyes upon the moon and the stars; "up yonder?" But he saw, from the earthly ball, that above and below were alike changing their position, according as one stood here or there on the rolling globe; and even if he mounted as high as the loftiest mountains of earth rear their heads, to the air which we below call clear and transparent—the pure heaven—a black darkness spread abroad like a cloth, and the sun had a coppery glow, and sent forth no rays, and our earth lay wrapped in an orange-coloured mist. How narrow were the limits of the corporeal eye, and how little the eye of the soul could see!—how little did even the wisest know of that which is the most important to us all!

In the most secret chamber of the castle lay the greatest treasure of the earth: the Book of Truth. Leaf for leaf, the wise man read it through: every man may read in this book, but only by fragments. To many an eye the characters seem to tremble, so that the words cannot be put together; on certain pages the writing often seems so pale, so blurred, that only a blank leaf appears. The wiser a man becomes, the more he will read; and the wisest read most. He knew how to unite the sunlight and the moonlight with the light of reason and of hidden powers; and through this stronger light many things came clearly before him from the page. But in the division of the book whose title is "Life after Death" not even one point was to be distinctly seen. That

THE BOOK OF TRUTH.

pained him. Should he not be able here upon earth to obtain a light by which everything should become clear to him that stood written in the Book of Truth?

Like the wise King Solomon, he understood the language of the animals, and could interpret their talk and their songs. But that made him none the wiser. He found out the forces of plants and metals—the forces to be used for the cure of diseases, for delaying death—but

none that could destroy death. In all created things that were within his reach he sought the light that should shine upon the certainty of an eternal life; but he found it not. The Book of Truth lay before him with leaves that appeared blank. Christianity showed itself to him in the Bible with words of promise of an eternal life; but he wanted to read it in *his* book; but here he saw nothing written on the subject.

He had five children—four sons, educated as well as the children of the wisest father could be, and a daughter, fair, mild, and clever, but blind; yet this appeared no deprivation to her—her father and brothers were outward eyes to her, and the vividness of her feelings saw for her.

Never had the sons gone farther from the castle than the branches of the tree extended, nor had the sister strayed from home. They were happy children in the land of childhood—in the beautiful fragrant Tree of the Sun. Like all children, they were very glad when any history was related to them; and the father told them many things that other children would not have understood; but these were just as clever as most grown-up people are among us. He explained to them what they saw in the pictures of life on the castle walls—the doings of men and the march of events in all the lands of the earth; and often the sons expressed the wish that they could be present at all the great deeds and take part in them; and their father then told them that out in the world it was difficult and toilsome—that the world was not quite what it appeared to them as they looked forth upon it from their beauteous home. He spoke to them of the true, the beautiful, and the good, and told them that these three held together in the world, and that under the pressure they had to endure they became hardened into a precious stone, clearer than the water of the diamond—a jewel whose splendour had value with God, whose brightness outshone everything, and which was the so-called "Stone of the Wise." He told them how men could attain by investigation to the knowledge of the existence of God, and that through men themselves one could attain to the certainty that such a jewel as the "Stone of the Wise" existed. This narration would have exceeded the perception of other children, but these children understood it, and at length other children, too, will learn to comprehend its meaning.

They questioned their father concerning the true, the beautiful, and the good; and he explained it to them, told them many things, and told them also that God, when He made man out of the dust of the earth, gave five kisses to His work—fiery kisses, heart kisses—which we now call the five senses. Through these the true, the beautiful, and the

good is seen, perceived, and understood; through these it is valued, protected, and furthered. Five senses have been given corporeally and mentally, inwardly and outwardly, to body and soul.

The children reflected deeply upon these things; they meditated upon them by day and by night. Then the eldest of the brothers dreamt a splendid dream. Strangely enough, the second brother had the same dream, and the third, and the fourth brother likewise; all of them dreamt exactly the same thing—namely, that each went out into the world and found the "Stone of the Wise," which gleamed like a beaming light on his forehead when, in the morning dawn, he rode back on his swift horse over the velvety green meadows of his home into the castle of his father; and the jewel threw such a heavenly light and radiance upon the leaves of the book, that everything was illuminated that stood written concerning the life beyond the grave. But the sister dreamt nothing about going out into the wide world. It never entered her mind. Her world was her father's house.

"I shall ride forth into the wide world," said the eldest brother. "I must try what life is like there, and go to and fro among men. I will practise only the good and the true; with these I will protect the beautiful. Much shall change for the better when I am there." Now his thoughts were bold and great, as our thoughts generally are at home, before we have gone forth into the world and have encountered wind and rain, and thorns and thistles.

In him and in all his brothers the five senses were highly developed, inwardly and outwardly; but each of them had *one* sense which in keenness and development surpassed the other four. In the case of the eldest this pre-eminent sense was Sight. This was to do him especial service. He said he had eyes for all time, eyes for all nations, eyes that could look into the depths of the earth, where the treasures lie hidden, and deep into the hearts of men, as though nothing but a pane of glass were placed before them: he could read more than we can see on the cheek that blushes or grows pale, in the eye that droops or smiles. Stags and antelopes escorted him to the boundary of his home towards the west, and there the wild swans received him and flew north-west. He followed them. And now he had gone far out into the world—far from the land of his father, that extended eastward to the end of the earth.

But how he opened his eyes in astonishment! Many things were here to be seen; and many things appear very different when a man beholds them with his own eyes, or when he merely sees them in a picture, as the son had done in his father's house, however faithful the

picture may be. At the outset he nearly lost his eyes in astonishment at all the rubbish and all the masquerading stuff put forward to represent the beautiful; but he did not lose them, and soon found full employment for them. He wished to go thoroughly and honestly to work in the understanding of the beautiful, the true, and the good. But how were these represented in the world? He saw that often the garland that belonged to the beautiful was given to the hideous; that the good was ofted passed by without notice, while mediocrity was applauded when it should have been hissed off. People looked to the dress, and not to the wearer; asked for a name, and not for desert; and went more by reputation than by service. It was the same thing everywhere.

"I see I must attack these things vigorously," he said; and attacked them with vigour accordingly. But while he was looking for the truth, came the Evil One, the father of lies. Gladly would the fiend have plucked out the eyes of this Seer; but that would have been too direct; the devil works in a more cunning way. He let him see and seek the true and the good; but while the young man was contemplating them, the evil spirit blew one mote after another into each of his eyes; and such a proceeding would be hurtful even to the best sight. Then the fiend blew upon the motes, so that they became beams; and the eyes were destroyed, and the Seer stood like a blind man in the wide world, and had no faith in it: he lost his good opinion of it and himself; and when a man gives up the world and himself, all is over with him.

"Over!" said the wild swan, who flew across the sea towards the east. "Over!" twittered the swallows, who likewise flew eastward, towards the Tree of the Sun. That was no good news that they carried to the young man's home.

"I fancy the *Seer* must have fared badly," said the second brother; "but the *Hearer* may have better fortune." For this one possessed the sense of hearing in an eminent degree: he could hear the grass grow, so quick was he to hear.

He took a hearty leave of all at home, and rode away, provided with good abilities and good intentions. The swallows escorted him, and he followed the swans; and he stood far from his home in the wide world.

But he experienced the fact that one may have too much of a good thing. His hearing was *too* fine. He not only heard the grass grow, but could hear every man's heart beat, in sorrow and in joy. The whole world was to him like a great clockmaker's workshop, wherein all the clocks were going "tick, tick!" and all the turret clocks striking "ding dong!" It was unbearable. For a long time his ears held out, but at

last all the noise and screaming became too much for one man. There came blackguard boys of sixty years old—for years alone don't make men—and raised a tumult at which the hearer might certainly have laughed, but for the applause which followed, and which echoed through every house and street, and was audible even in the country high road. Falsehood thrust itself forward, and played the master; the bells on the fool's cap jangled, and declared they were church bells; and the noise became too bad for the *Hearer*, and he thrust his fingers into his ears; but still he could hear false singing and bad sounds, gossip and idle words, scandal and slander, groaning and moaning without and within. Heaven help us! He thrust his fingers deeper and deeper into his ears, but at last the drums burst. Now he could hear nothing at all of the good, the true, and the beautiful, for his hearing was to have been the bridge by which he crossed. He became silent and suspicious, trusted no one at last, not even himself, and, no longer hoping to find and bring home the costly jewel, he gave it up, and gave himself up; and that was the worst of all. The birds who winged their flight towards the east brought tidings of this, till the news reached the castle in the Tree of the Sun.

"*I* will try now!" said the third brother. "I have a sharp *nose!*"

Now that was not said in very good taste; but it was his way, and one must take him as he was. He had a happy temper, and was a poet, a real poet: he could sing many things that he could not say, and many things struck him far earlier than they occurred to others. "I can smell fire!" he said; and he attributed to the sense of smelling, which he possessed in a high degree, a great power in the region of the beautiful. "Every fragrant spot in the realm of the beautiful has its frequenters," he said. "One man feels at home in the atmosphere of the tavern, among the flaring tallow candles, where the smell of spirits mingles with the fumes of bad tobacco. Another prefers sitting among the overpowering scent of jessamine, or scenting himself with strong clove oil. This man seeks out the fresh sea breeze, while that one climbs to the highest mountain top and looks down upon the busy little life beneath." Thus he spake. It seemed to him as if he had already been out in the world, as if he had already associated with men and known them. But this experience arose from within himself: it was the poet within him, the gift of Heaven, and bestowed on him in his cradle.

He bade farewell to his paternal roof in the Tree of the Sun, and departed on foot through the pleasant scenery of home. Arrived at its confines, he mounted on the back of an ostrich, which runs faster than

a horse; and afterwards, when he fell in with the wild swans, he swung himself on the strongest of them, for he loved change; and away he flew over the sea to distant lands with great forests, deep lakes, mighty mountains, and proud cities; and wherever he came it seemed as if sunshine travelled with him across the fields, for every flower, every bush, every tree exhaled a new fragrance, in the consciousness that a friend and protector was in the neighbourhood, who understood them and knew their value. The crippled rose bush reared up its twigs, unfolded its leaves, and bore the most beautiful roses; every one could see it, and even the black damp wood-snail noticed its beauty.

"I will give my seal to the flower," said the Snail; "I have spit at it, and I can do no more for it."

"Thus it always fares with the beautiful in this world!" said the poet; and he sang a song concerning it, sang it in his own way; but nobody listened. Then he gave the drummer twopence and a peacock's feather, and set the song for the drum, and had it drummed in all the streets of the town; and the people heard it, and said, "That 's a well-constructed song." Then the poet sang several songs of the beautiful, the true, and the good. His songs were listened to in the tavern, where the tallow candles smoked, in the fresh meadow, in the forest, and on the high seas. It appeared as if this brother was to have better fortune than the two others. But the evil spirit was angry at this, and accordingly he set to work with incense powder and incense smoke, which he can prepare so artfully as to confuse an angel, and how much more therefore a poor poet! The Evil One knows how to take that kind of people! He surrounded the poet so completely with incense, that the man lost his head, and forgot his mission and his home, and at last himself—and ended in smoke.

But when the little birds heard of this they mourned, and for three days they sang not one song. The black wood-snail became blacker still, not for grief, but for envy. "They should have strewed incense for me," she said, "for it was I who gave him his idea of the most famous of his songs, the drum song of 'The Way of the World;' it was I who spat at the rose! I can bring witness to the fact."

But no tidings of all this penetrated to the poet's home in India, for all the birds were silent for three days; and when the time of mourning was over, their grief had been so deep that they had forgotten for whom they wept. That 's the usual way!

"Now I shall have to go out into the world, to disappear like the rest," said the fourth brother. He had just as good a wit as the third, but he was no poet, though he could be witty. Those two had filled

THE DEPARTURE OF THE THIRD BROTHER.

the castle with cheerfulness, and now the last cheerfulness was going away. Sight and hearing has always been looked upon as the two chief senses of men, and as the two that it is most desirable to sharpen; the other senses are looked upon as of less consequence. But that was not the opinion of this son, as he had especially cultivated his *taste* in every respect, and taste is very powerful. It holds sway over what goes into the mouth, and also over what penetrates into the mind; and consequently this brother tasted everything that was stored up in bottles

and pots, saying that this was the rough work of his office. Every man was to him a vessel in which something was seething, every country an enormous kitchen, a kitchen of the mind.

"That was no delicacy," he said, and he wanted to go out and try what was delicate. "Perhaps fortune may be more favourable to me than it was to my brothers," he said. "I shall start on my travels. But what conveyance shall I choose? Are air balloons invented yet?" he asked his father, who knew of all inventions that had been made, or that were to be made. But air balloons had not yet been invented, nor steam ships, nor railways. "Good: then I shall choose an air balloon," he said; "my father knows how they are made and guided. Nobody has invented them yet, and consequently the people will believe that it is an aërial phantom. When I have used the balloon I will burn it, and for this purpose you must give me a few pieces of the invention that will be made next—I mean chemical matches."

And he obtained what he wanted, and flew away. The birds accompanied him farther than they had flown with the other brothers. They were curious to know what would be the result of the flight, and more of them came sweeping up: they thought he was some new bird; and he soon had a goodly following. The air became black with birds, they came on like a cloud—like the cloud of locusts over the land of Egypt.

Now he was out in the wide world.

The balloon descended over one of the greatest cities, and the aëronaut took up his station on the highest point, on the church steeple. The balloon rose again, which it ought not to have done: where it went to is not known, but that was not a matter of consequence, for it was not yet invented. Then he sat on the church steeple. The birds no longer hovered around him, they had got tired of him, and he was tired of them.

All the chimneys in the town were smoking merrily. "Those are altars erected to thy honour!" said the Wind, who wished to say something agreeable to him. He sat boldly up there, and looked down upon the people in the street. There was one stepping along, proud of his purse, another of the key he carried at his girdle, though he had nothing to unlock; one proud of his moth-eaten coat, another of his wasted body. "Vanity! I must hasten downward, dip my finger in the pot, and taste!" he said. "But for awhile I will still sit here, for the wind blows so pleasantly against my back. I 'll sit here so long as the wind blows. I 'll enjoy a slight rest. 'It is good to sleep long in the morning, when one has much to do,' says the lazy man. I 'll stop here so long as this wind blows, for it pleases me."

And there he sat, but he was sitting upon the weathercock of the steeple, which kept turning round and round with him, so that he was under the false impression that the same wind still blew; so he might stay up there a goodly while.

But in India, in the castle in the Tree of the Sun, it was solitary and still, since the brothers had gone away one after the other.

"It goes not well with them," said the father; "they will never bring the gleaming jewel home; it is not made for me; they are gone, they are dead!" And he bent down over the Book of Truth, and gazed at the page on which he should read of life after death; but for him nothing was to be seen or learned upon it.

The blind daughter was his consolation and joy: she attached herself with sincere affection to him; for the sake of his peace and joy she wished the costly jewel might be found and brought home. With kindly longing she thought of her brothers. Where were they? Where did they live? She wished sincerely that she might dream of them, but it was strange, not even in dreams could she approach them. But at length, one night, she dreamt that the voices of her brothers sounded across to her, calling to her from the wide world, and she could not refrain, but went far far out, and yet it seemed in her dream that she was still in her father's house. She did not meet her brothers, but she felt, as it were, a fire burning in her hand, but it did not hurt her, for it was the jewel she was bringing to her father. When she awoke, she thought for a moment that she still held the stone, but it was the knob of her distaff that she was grasping. During the long nights she had spun incessantly, and round the distaff was turned a thread, finer than the finest web of the spider; human eyes were unable to distinguish the separate threads. She had wetted them with her tears, and the twist was strong as a cable. She rose, and her resolution was taken: the dream must be made a reality. It was night, and her father slept. She pressed a kiss on his hand, and then took her distaff, and fastened the end of the thread to her father's house. But for this, blind as she was, she would never have found her way home; to the thread she must hold fast, and trust not to herself or to others. From the Tree of the Sun she broke four leaves; these she would confide to wind and weather, that they might fly to her brothers as a letter and a greeting, in case she did not meet them in the wide world. How would she fare out yonder, she, the poor blind child? But she had the invisible thread to which she could hold fast. She possessed a gift which all the others lacked. This was *thoroughness;* and in virtue of this it seemed as if she could see to the tips of her fingers, and hear down into her very heart.

And quietly she went forth into the noisy, whirling, wonderful world, and wherever she went the sky grew bright—she felt the warm ray—the rainbow spread itself out from the dark world through the blue air. She heard the song of the birds, and smelt the scent of orange groves and apple orchards so strongly that she seemed to taste it. Soft tones and charming songs reached her ear, but also howling and roaring, and thoughts and opinions, sounded in strange contradiction to each other. Into the innermost depths of her heart penetrated the echoes of human thoughts and feelings. One chorus sounded darkly—

"The life of earth is a shadow vain
A night created for sorrow!"

but then came another strain—

"The life of earth is the scent of the rose,
With its sunshine and its pleasure."

And if one strophe sounded painfully—

"Each mortal thinks of himself alone,
This truth has been manifested"—

on the other side the answer pealed forth—

"A mighty stream of warmest love,
All through the world shall guide us."

She heard, indeed, the words—

"In the little petty whirl here below,
Each thing shows mean and paltry;

but then came also the comfort—

"Many things great and good are achieved,
That the ear of man heareth never."

and if sometimes the mocking strain sounded around her—

"Join in the common cry; with a jest
Destroy the good gifts of the Giver,"

in the blind girl's heart a stronger voice repeated—

"To trust in thyself and in God is best;
His good will be done for ever."

And whenever she entered the circle of human kind, and appeared among young or old, the knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful beamed into their hearts. Whether she entered the study of the artist, or the festive, decorated hall, or the crowded factory, with its

THE BLIND GIRL'S MESSENGERS.

whirring wheels, it seemed as though a sunbeam were stealing in—as if the sweet string sounded, the flower exhaled its perfume, and a living dew-drop fell upon the exhausted blood.

But the evil spirit could not see this and be content. He has more cunning than ten thousand men, and he found out a way to compass his end. He betook himself to the marsh, collected little bubbles of the stagnant water, and passed over them a sevenfold echo of lying words to give them strength. Then he pounded up paid-for heroic

poems and lying epitaphs, as many as he could get, boiled them in tears that envy had shed, put upon them rouge he had scraped from faded cheeks, and of these he composed a maiden, with the aspect and gait of the blessed blind girl, the angel of thoroughness; and then the Evil One's plot was in full progress. The world knew not which of the two was the true one; and, indeed, how should the world know?

"To trust in thyself and in God is best;
His good will be done for ever,"

sung the blind girl, in full faith. She intrusted the four green leaves from the Tree of the Sun to the winds, as a letter and a greeting to her brothers, and had full confidence that they would reach their destination, and that the jewel would be found which outshines all the glories of the world. From the forehead of humanity it would gleam even to the castle of her father.

"Even to my father's house," she repeated. "Yes, the place of the jewel is on earth, and I shall bring more than the promise of it with me. I feel its glow, it swells more and more in my closed hand. Every grain of truth, were it ever so fine, which the sharp wind carried up and whirled towards me, I took up and treasured; I let it be penetrated by the fragrance of the beautiful, of which there is so much in the world, even for the blind. I took the sound of the beating heart engaged in what is good, and added it to the first. All that I bring is but dust, but still it is the dust of the jewel we seek, and in plenty. I have my whole hand full of it." And she stretched forth her hand towards her father. She was soon at home—she had travelled thither in the flight of thoughts, never having quitted her hold of the invisible thread from the paternal home.

The evil powers rushed with hurricane fury over the Tree of the Sun, pressed with a wind-blast against the open doors, and into the sanctuary where lay the Book of Truth.

"It will be blown away by the wind!" said the father, and he seized the hand she had opened.

"No," she replied, with quiet confidence, "it cannot be blown away; I feel the beam warming my very soul."

And the father became aware of a glancing flame, there where the shining dust poured out of her hand over the Book of Truth, that was to tell of the certainty of an everlasting life, and on it stood one shining word—one only word—"BELIEVE."

And with the father and daughter were again the four brothers. When the green leaf fell upon the bosom of each, a longing for home

had seized them, and led them back. They had arrived. The birds of passage, and the stag, the antelope, and all the creatures of the forest followed them, for all wished to have a part in their joy.

We have often seen, where a sunbeam bursts through a crack in the door into the dusty room, how a whirling column of dust seems circling round; but this was not poor and insignificant like common dust, for even the rainbow is dead in colour compared with the beauty which showed itself. Thus, from the leaf of the book with the beaming word "*Believe*," arose every grain of truth, decked with the charms of *the beautiful* and *the good*, burning brighter than the mighty pillar of flame that led Moses and the children of Israel through the desert; and from the word "*Believe*" the bridge of *Hope* arose, spanning the distance, even to the immeasurable love in the realms of the Infinite.

THE BUTTERFLY.

The Butterfly wished for a bride; and, as may be imagined, he wanted to select a very pretty one from among the flowers; therefore he threw a critical glance at all the flower-beds, and found that every flower sat quietly and demurely on her stalk, just as a maiden ought to sit, before she is engaged; but there were a great many of them, and the choice threatened to become wearisome. The Butterfly did not care to take much trouble, and consequently he flew off on a visit to the daisies. The French call this floweret "Marguerite," and they know that Marguerite can prophecy, when lovers pluck off its leaves, and ask of every leaf they pluck some question concerning their lovers. "Heartily? Painfully? Loves me much? A little? Not at all?" and so on. Every one asks in his own language. The Butterfly came to Marguerite too, to inquire; but he did not pluck off her leaves: he kissed each of them, for he considered that most is to be done with kindness.

"Darling Marguerite daisy!" he said to her, "you are the wisest woman among the flowers. Pray, pray tell me, shall I get this one or that? Which will be my bride? When I know that, I will directly fly to her, and propose for her."

But Marguerite did not answer him. She was angry that he had

called her a "woman," when she was yet a girl; and there is a great difference. He asked for the second and for the third time, and when she remained dumb, and answered him not a word, he would wait no longer, but flew away to begin his wooing at once.

It was in the beginning of spring; the crocus and the snowdrop were blooming around.

"They are very pretty," thought the Butterfly. "Charming little lasses, but a little too much of the schoolgirl about them." Like all young lads, he looked out for the elder girls.

Then he flew of to the anemones. These were a little too bitter for his taste; the violet somewhat too sentimental; the lime blossoms were too small, and, moreover, they had too many relations; the apple blossoms—they looked like roses, but they bloomed to-day, to fall off to-morrow, to fall beneath the first wind that blew; and he thought that a marriage with them would last too short a time. The pease blossom pleased him best of all: she was white and red, and graceful and delicate, and belonged to the domestic maidens who look well, and at the same time are useful in the kitchen. He was just about to make his offer, when close by the maiden he saw a pod at whose end hung a withered flower.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"That is my sister," replied the Pease Blossom.

"Oh, indeed; and you will get to look like her!" he said. And away he flew, for he felt quite shocked.

The honeysuckle hung forth blooming from the hedge, but there was a number of girls like that, with long faces and sallow complexions. No, he did not like her.

But which one did he like?

The spring went by, and the summer drew towards its close; it was autumn, but he was still undecided.

And now the flowers appeared in their most gorgeous robes, but in vain; they had not the fresh fragrant air of youth. But the heart demands fragrance, even when it is no longer young, and there is very little of that to be found among the dahlias and dry chrysanthemums, therefore the Butterfly turned to the mint on the ground.

You see this plant has no blossom; but indeed it is blossom all over, full of fragrance from head to foot, with flower scent in every leaf.

"I shall take her," said the Butterfly.

And he made an offer for her.

But the mint stood silent and stiff, listening to him. At last she said,

"Friendship, if you please; but nothing more. I am old, and you are

old, but we may very well live for one another; but as to marrying—no—don't let us appear ridiculous at our age."

And thus it happened that the Butterfly had no wife at all. He had been too long choosing, and that is a bad plan. So the Butterfly became what we call an old bachelor.

It was late in autumn, with rain and cloudy weather. The wind blew cold over the backs of the old willow trees, so that they creaked again. It was no weather to be flying about in summer clothes, nor, indeed, was the Butterfly in the open air. He had got under shelter by chance, where there was fire in the stove and the heat of summer. He could live well enough, but he said,

"It 's not enough merely to live. One must have freedom, sunshine, and a little flower."

And he flew against the window-frame, and was seen and admired, and then stuck upon a pin and placed in the box of curiosities; they could not do more for him.

"Now I am perched on a stalk, like the flowers," said the Butterfly. "It certainly is not very pleasant. It must be something like being married, for one is stuck fast."

And he consoled himself in some measure with the thought.

"That 's very poor comfort," said the potted Plants in the room.

"But," thought the Butterfly, "one cannot well trust these potted Plants. They 've had too much to do with mankind."

IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA.

Great ships had been sent up towards the North Pole, to explore the most distant coasts, and to try how far men might penetrate up yonder. For more than a year they had already been pushing their way among ice, and snow, and mist, and their crews had endured many hardships; and now the winter was come, and the sun had entirely disappeared from those regions. For many many weeks there would now be a long night. All around, as far as the eye could reach, was a single field of ice; the ships had been made fast to it, and the snow had piled itself up in great masses, and of these huts had been built in the form of beehives, some of them spacious as the old "Hun's Graves"—others only containing room enough to hold two or four men. But it was not

dark, for the northern lights flamed red and blue, like a great continual firework; and the snow glistened and gleamed, so that the night here was one long, flaming, twilight hour. When the gleam was brightest, the natives came in crowds, wonderful to behold in their rough, hairy, fur dresses; and they rode in sledges formed of blocks of ice, and brought with them furs and peltry in great bundles, so that the snow houses were furnished with warm carpets; and, in turn, the furs also served for coverlets when the sailors went to bed under their roofs of snow, while outside it froze in far different fashion than here with us in the winter. In our regions it was still the late autumn-time; and they thought of that up yonder, and often pictured to themselves the yellow leaves on the trees of home. The clock showed that it was evening, and time to go to sleep; and in the huts two men already had stretched themselves out, seeking rest. The younger of these had his best, dearest treasure, that he had brought from home — the Bible, which his grandmother had given him on his departure. Every night the sacred volume rested beneath his head, and he knew from his childish years what was written in it. Every day he read in the book, and often the holy words came into his mind where it is written, "If I take the wings of the morning, and flee into the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Thou art with me, and Thy right hand shall uphold me;" and, under the influence of the eternal word and of the true faith, he closed his eyes, and sleep came upon him, and dreams — the manifestation of Providence to the spirit. The soul lived and was working while the body was enjoying its rest: he felt this life, and it seemed to him as if dear old well-known melodies were sounding; as if the mild breezes of summer were playing around him; and over his bed he beheld a brightness, as if something were shining in through the crust of snow. He lifted up his head, and behold, the bright gleam was no ripple down from the snowy roof, but came from the mighty pinions of an angel, into whose beaming face he was gazing. As if from the cup of a lily the angel arose from among the leaves of the Bible, and stretching out his arm, the walls of the snow hut sunk down around, as though they had been a light airy veil of mist; the green meadows and hills of home, and its ruddy woods, lay spread around him in the quiet sunshine of a beauteous autumn day; the nest of the stork was empty, but ripe fruit still clung to the wild apple tree, although the leaves had fallen; the red hips gleamed, and the magpie whistled in the green cage over the window of the peasant's cottage that was his home; the magpie whistled the tune that had been taught him, and the grandmother hung green food around the cage, as he, the grandson, had been accustomed to do;

and the daughter of the blacksmith, very young and fair, stood by the well drawing water, and nodded to the granddame, and the old woman nodded to her, and showed her a letter that had come from a long way off. That very morning the letter had arrived from the cold regions of the North—there where the grandson was resting in the hand of God. And they smiled and they wept; and he, far away among the ice and snow, under the pinions of the angel, he, too, smiled and wept with them in spirit, for he saw them and heard them. And from the letter they read aloud the words of Holy Writ, that in the uttermost parts of the sea His right hand would be a stay and a safety. And the sound of a beauteous hymn welled up all around; and the angel spread his wings like a veil over the sleeping youth. The vision had fled, and it grew dark in the snow hut; but the Bible rested beneath his head, and faith and hope dwelt in his soul. God was with him; and he carried home about with him in his heart, even in the uttermost parts of the sea.

THE PHŒNIX BIRD.

In the Garden of Paradise, beneath the Tree of Knowledge, bloomed a rose bush. Here, in the first rose, a bird was born: his flight was like the flashing of light, his plumage was beauteous, and his song ravishing.

But when Eve plucked the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, when she and Adam were driven from Paradise, there fell from the flaming sword of the cherub a spark into the nest of the bird, which blazed up forthwith. The bird perished in the flames; but from the red egg in the nest there fluttered aloft a new one—the one solitary Phœnix bird. The fable tells us that he dwells in Arabia, and that every year he burns himself to death in his nest; but each time a new Phœnix, the only one in the world, rises up from the red egg.

The bird flutters round us, swift as light, beauteous in colour, charming in song. When a mother sits by her infant's cradle, he stands on the pillow, and, with his wings, forms a glory around the infant's head. He flies through the chamber of content, and brings sunshine into it, and the violets on the humble table smell doubly sweet.

But the Phœnix is not the bird of Arabia alone. He wings his way

in the glimmer of the northern lights over the plains of Lapland, and hops among the yellow flowers in the short Greenland summer. Beneath the copper mountains of Fahlun, and England's coal mines, he flies, in the shape of a dusty moth, over the hymn-book that rests on the knees of the pious miner. On a lotus leaf he floats down the sacred waters of the Ganges, and the eye of the Hindoo maid gleams bright when she beholds him.

The Phœnix bird, dost thou not know him? The Bird of Paradise, the holy swan of song! On the car of Thespis he sat in the guise of a chattering raven, and flapped his black wings, smeared with the lees of wine; over the sounding harp of Iceland swept the swan's red beak; on Shakespeare's shoulder he sat in the guise of Odin's raven, and whispered in the poet's ear "Immortality!" and at the minstrels' feast he fluttered through the halls of the Wartburg.

The Phœnix bird, dost thou not know him? He sang to thee the *Marseillaise*, and thou kissedst the pen that fell from his wing; he came in the radiance of Paradise, and perchance thou didst turn away from him towards the sparrow who sat with tinsel on his wings.

The Bird of Paradise — renewed each century — born in flame, ending in flame! Thy picture, in a golden frame, hangs in the halls of the rich; and thou thyself often fliest around, lonely and disregarded, a myth—"The Phœnix of Arabia."

In Paradise, when thou wert born in the first rose, beneath the Tree of Knowledge, thou receivedst a kiss, and thy right name was given thee—thy name POETRY.

"THE WILL-O'-THE-WISP IS IN THE TOWN,"

SAYS THE MOOR-WOMAN.

THERE was a man who once knew many stories, but they had slipped away from him—so he said; the Story that used to visit him of its own accord no longer came and knocked at his door: and why did it come no longer? It is true enough that for days and years the man had not thought of it, had not expected it to come and knock; and if he had expected it, it would certainly not have come; for without there was war, and within was the care and sorrow that war brings with it.

The stork and the swallows came back from their long journey, for they thought of no danger; and, behold, when they arrived, the nest was burnt, the habitations of men were burnt, the hedges were all in disorder, and everything seemed gone, and the enemy's horses were stamping in the old graves. Those were hard, gloomy times, but they came to an end.

And now they were past and gone, so people said; and yet no story came and knocked at the door, or gave any tidings of its presence.

"I suppose it must be dead, or gone away with many other things," said the man.

But the story never dies. And more than a whole year went by, and he longed—oh, so very much!—for the story.

"I wonder if the story will ever come back again and knock?"

And he remembered it so well in all the various forms in which it had come to him, sometimes young and charming, like spring itself, sometimes as a beautiful maiden, with a wreath of thyme in her hair, and a beechen branch in her hand, and with eyes that gleamed like deep woodland lakes in the bright sunshine.

Sometimes it had come to him in the guise of a pedlar, and had opened its box and let silver ribbon come fluttering out, with verses and inscriptions of old remembrances.

But it was most charming of all when it came as an old grandmother, with silvery hair, and such large sensible eyes; she knew very well how to tell about the oldest times, long before the Princesses span with the golden spindles, and the dragons lay outside the castle, guarding them. She told with such an air of truth that black spots danced before the eyes of all who heard her, and the floor became black with human blood; terrible to see and to hear, and yet so entertaining, because such a long time had passed since it all happened.

"Will it ever knock at my door again?" said the man; and he gazed at the door, so that black spots came before his eyes and upon the floor; he did not know if it was blood, or mourning crape from the dark heavy days.

And as he sat thus, the thought came upon him, whether the story might not have hidden itself, like the Princess in the old tale? And he would now go in search of it; if he found it, it would beam in new splendour, lovelier than ever.

"Who knows? Perhaps it has hidden itself in the straw that balances on the margin of the well. Carefully, carefully! Perhaps it lies hidden in a certain flower—that flower in one of the great books on the bookshelf."

And the man went and opened one of the newest books, to gain information on this point; but there was no flower to be found. There he read about Holger Danske; and the man read that the tale had been invented and put together by a monk in France, that it was a romance, "translated into Danish and printed in that language;" that Holger Danske had never really lived, and consequently could never come again, as we have sung, and have been so glad to believe. And William Tell was treated just like Holger Danske. These were all only myths—nothing on which we could depend; and yet it is all written in a very learned book.

IN SEARCH OF THE STORY.

"Well, I shall believe what I believe!" said the man; "there grows no plantain where no foot has trod."

And he closed the book and put it back in its place, and went to the fresh flowers at the window; perhaps the story might have hidden itself in the red tulips, with the golden yellow edges, or in the fresh rose, or in the beaming camellia. The sunshine lay among the flowers, but no story.

The flowers which had been here in the dark troublous times had been much more beautiful; but they had been cut off, one after another, to be woven into wreaths and placed in coffins, and the flag had waved over them! Perhaps the story had been buried with the flowers; but then the flowers would have known of it, and the coffin would have heard it, and every little blade of grass that shot forth would have told of it. The story never dies.

Perhaps it has been here once, and has knocked—but who had eyes or ears for it in those times? People looked darkly, gloomily, and almost angrily at the sunshine of spring, at the twittering birds, and all the cheerful green; the tongue could not even bear the old, merry, popular songs, and they were laid in the coffin with so much that our heart held dear. The story may have knocked without obtaining a hearing; there was none to bid it welcome, and so it may have gone away.

"I will go forth and seek it! Out in the country! out in the wood! and on the open sea-beach!"

Out in the country lies an old manor house, with red walls, pointed gables, and a red flag that floats on the tower. The nightingale sings among the finely-fringed beech-leaves, looking at the blooming apple trees of the garden, and thinking that they bear roses. Here the bees are mightily busy in the summer-time, and hover round their queen with their humming song. The autumn has much to tell of the wild chase, of the leaves of the trees, and of the races of men that are passing away together. The wild swans sing at Christmas-time on the open water, while in the old hall the guests by the fire-side gladly listen to songs and to old legends.

Down into the old part of the garden, where the great avenue of wild chestnut trees lures the wanderer to tread its shades, went the man who was in search of the story; for here the wind had once murmured something to him of "Waldemar Daa and his Daughters." The Dryad in the tree, who was the story-mother herself, had here told him the "Dream of the old Oak Tree." Here, in the time of the ancestral mother, had stood clipped hedges, but now only ferns and stinging-nettles grew there, hiding the scattered fragments of old sculptured figures; the moss is growing in their eyes, but they can see as well as ever, which was more than the man could do who was in search of the story, for he could not find it. Where could it be?

The crows flew past him by hundreds across the old trees, and screamed, "Krah! da!—Krah! da!"

And he went out of the garden, and over the grass-plot of the yard, into the alder grove; there stood a little six-sided house, with a poultry-yard and a duck-yard. In the middle of the room sat the old woman, who had the management of the whole, and who knew accurately about every egg that was laid, and about every chicken that could creep out of an egg. But she was not the story of which the man was in search; that she could attest with a Christian certificate of baptism and of vaccination that lay in her drawer.

Without, not far from the house, is a hill covered with red-thorn and broom; here lies an old grave-stone, which was brought here many years ago from the churchyard of the provincial town, a remembrance of one of the most honoured councillors of the place; his wife and his five daughters, all with folded hands and stiff ruffs, stand round him. One could look at them so long, that it had an effect upon the thoughts, and these reacted upon the stones, as if they were telling of old times: at least it had been so with the man who was in search of the story.

As he came nearer, he noticed a living butterfly sitting on the forehead of the sculptured councillor. The butterfly flapped its wings, and flew a little bit farther, and then returned fatigued to sit upon the grave-stone, as if to point out what grew there. Four-leaved shamrocks grew there; there were seven specimens close to each other. When fortune comes, it comes in a heap. He plucked the shamrocks, and put them in his pocket.

"Fortune is as good as red gold, but a new, charming story would be better still," thought the man; but he could not find it here.

And the sun went down, round and large; the meadow was covered with vapour: the moor-woman was at her brewing.

It was evening; he stood alone in his room, and looked out upon the sea, over the meadow, over moor and coast. The moon shone bright, a mist was over the meadow, making it look like a great lake; and, indeed, it was once so, as the legend tells—and in the moonlight the eye realizes these myths.

Then the man thought of what he had been reading in the town, that William Tell and Holger Danske never really lived, but yet live in popular story, like the lake yonder, a living evidence for such myths. Yes, Holger Danske will return again!

As he stood thus and thought, something beat quite strongly against the window. Was it a bird, a bat, or an owl? Those are not let in, even when they knock. The window flew open of itself, and an old woman looked in at the man.

"What 's your pleasure?" said he. "Who are you? You're looking in at the first floor window. Are you standing on a ladder?"

"You have a four-leaved shamrock in your pocket," she replied. "Indeed, you have seven, and one of them is a six-leaved one."

"Who are you?" asked the man again.

"The moor-woman," she replied. "The moor-woman who brews. I was at it. The bung was in the cask, but one of the little moor-imps pulled it out in his mischief, and flung it up into the yard, where it beat

against the window; and now the beer's running out of the cask, and that won't do good to anybody."

THE MOOR-WOMAN BREWING.

"Pray tell me some more!" said the man.

"Yes, wait a little," answered the moor-woman. "I've something else to do just now." And she was gone.

The man was going to shut the window, when the woman already stood before him again.

"Now it 's done," she said; "but I shall have half the beer to brew over again to-morrow, if the weather is suitable. Well, what have you to ask me? I 've come back, for I always keep my word, and you have seven four-leaved shamrocks in your pocket, and one of them is a six-leaved one. That inspires respect, for that 's an order that grows beside the sandy way; but that every one does not find. What have you to ask me? Don't stand there like a ridiculous oaf, for I must go back again directly to my bung and my cask."

And the man asked about the story, and inquired if the moor-woman had met it in her journeyings.

"By the big brewing-vat!" exclaimed the woman, "haven't you got stories enough? I really believe that most people have enough of them. Here are other things to take notice of, other things to examine. Even the children have gone beyond that. Give the little boy a cigar, and the little girl a new crinoline; they like that much better. To listen to stories! No, indeed, there are more important things to be done here, and other things to notice!"

"What do you mean by that?" asked the man, "and what do you know of the world? You don't see anything but frogs and will-o'-the-wisps!"

"Yes, beware of the will-o'-the-wisps," said the moor-woman, "for they 're out—they 're let loose—that 's what we must talk about! Come to me in the moor, where my presence is necessary, and I will tell you all about it; but you must make haste, and come while your seven four-leaved shamrocks, of which one has six leaves, are still fresh, and the moon stands high!"

And the moor-woman was gone.

It struck twelve in the town, and before the last stroke had died away, the man was out in the yard, out in the garden, and stood in the meadow. The mist had vanished, and the moor-woman stopped her brewing.

"You 've been a long time coming!" said the moor-woman. "Witches get forward faster than men, and I 'm glad that I belong to the witch folk!"

"What have you to say to me now?" asked the man. "Is it anything about the story?"

"Can you never get beyond asking about that?" retorted the woman.

"Can you tell me anything about the poetry of the future?" resumed the man.

"Don't get on your stilts," said the crone, "and I'll answer you. You think of nothing but poetry, and only ask about that Story, as if she were the lady of the whole troop. She's the oldest of us all, but she takes precedence of the youngest. I know her well. I've been young, too, and she's no chicken now. I was once quite a pretty elf-maiden, and have danced in my time with the others in the moonlight, and have heard the nightingale, and have gone into the forest and met the story maiden, who was always to be found out there, running about. Sometimes she took up her night's lodging in a half-blown tulip, or in a field flower; sometimes she would slip into the church, and wrap herself in the mourning crape that hung down from the candles on the altar."

"You are capitally well-informed," said the man.

"I ought at least to know as much as you," answered the moor-woman. "Stories and poetry—yes, they're like two yards of the same piece of stuff: they can go and lie down where they like, and one can brew all their prattle, and have it all the better and cheaper. You shall have it from me for nothing. I've a whole cupboard-full of poetry, in bottles. It makes essences; and that's the best of it—bitter and sweet herbs. I have everything that people want of poetry, in bottles, so that I can put a little on my handkerchief, on holidays, to smell."

"Why, these are wonderful things that you're telling!" said the man. "You have poetry in bottles?"

"More than you can require," said the woman. "I suppose you know the history of 'the Girl who trod on the Loaf, so that she might not soil her Shoes'? That has been written, and printed too."

"I told that story myself," said the man.

"Yes, then you must know it; and you must know also that the girl sank into the earth, directly to the moor-woman, just as Old Bogey's grandmother was paying her a morning visit to inspect the brewery. She saw the girl gliding down, and asked to have her as a remembrance of her visit, and got her too; while I received a present that's of no use to me—a travelling druggist's shop—a whole cupboard-full of poetry in bottles. Grandmother told me where the cupboard was to be placed, and there it's standing still. Just look! You've your seven four-leaved shamrocks in your pocket, one of which is a six-leaved one, and so you will be able to see it."

And really in the midst of the moor lay something like a great knotted block of alder, and that was the old grandmother's cupboard. The moor-woman said that this was always open to her and to every one in the land, if they only knew where the cupboard stood. It could be opened either at the front or at the back, and at every side and corner—a perfect work

of art, and yet only an old alder stump in appearance. The poets of all lands, and especially those of our own country, had been arranged here; the spirit of them had been extracted, refined, criticised and renovated, and then stored up in bottles. With what may be called great aptitude, if it was not genius, the grandmother had taken as it were the flavour of this and of that poet, and had added a little devilry, and then corked up the bottles for use during all future times.

"Pray let me see," said the man.

"Yes, but there are more important things to hear," replied the moor-woman.

"But now we are at the cupboard!" said the man. And he looked in. "Here are bottles of all sizes. What is in this one? and what in that one yonder?"

"Here is what they call may-balm," replied the woman: "I have not tried it myself. But I have not yet told you the 'more important' thing you were to hear. THE WILL-O'-THE-WISP 'S IN THE TOWN! That 's of much more consequence than poetry and stories. I ought, indeed, to hold my tongue; but there must be a necessity—a fate—a something that sticks in my throat, and that wants to come out. Take care, you mortals!"

"I don't understand a word of all this!" cried the man.

"Be kind enough to seat yourself on that cupboard," she retorted, "but take care you don't fall through and break the bottles—you know what 's inside them. I must tell of the great event. It occurred no longer ago than the day before yesterday. It did not happen earlier. It has now three hundred and sixty-three days to run about. I suppose you know how many days there are in a year?"

And this is what the moor-woman told:

"There was a great commotion yesterday out here in the marsh! There was a christening feast! A little Will-o'-the-Wisp was born here—in fact, twelve of them were born all together; and they have permission, if they choose to use it, to go abroad among men, and to move about and command among them, just as if they were born mortals. That was a great event in the marsh, and accordingly all the Will-o'-the-Wisps, male and female, went dancing like little lights across the moor. There are some of them of the dog species, but those are not worth mentioning. I sat there on the cupboard, and had all the twelve little new-born Will-o'-the-Wisps upon my lap: they shone like glowworms; they already began to hop, and increased in size every moment, so that before a quarter of an hour had elapsed, each of them looked just as large as his father or his uncle. Now, it 's an old-

established regulation and favour, that when the moon stands just as it did yesterday, and the wind blows just as it blew then, it is allowed and

THE MOOR-WOMAN TELLING THE STORY.

accorded to all Will-o'-the-Wisps—that is, to all those who are born at that minute of time—to become mortals, and individually to exert their power for the space of one year.

"The Will-o'-the-Wisp may run about in the country and through the world, if it is not afraid of falling into the sea, or of being blown out by a heavy storm. It can enter into a person, and speak for him, and make all the movements it pleases. The Will-o'-the-Wisp may take whatever form he likes, of man or woman, and can act in their spirit and in their disguise, in such a way that he can effect whatever he wishes to do. But he must manage, in the course of the year, to lead three hundred and sixty-five people into a bad way, and in a grand style, too; to lead them away from the right and the truth; and then he reaches the highest point. Such Will-o'-the-Wisps can attain to the honour of being a runner before the devil's state coach; and then he 'll wear clothes of fiery yellow, and breathe forth flames out of his throat. That 's enough to make a simple Will-o'-the-Wisp smack his lips. But there 's some danger in this, and a great deal of work for a Will-o'-the-Wisp who aspires to play so distinguished a part. If the eyes of the man are opened to what he is, and if the man can then blow him away, it 's all over with him, and he must come back into the marsh; or if, before the year is up, the Will-o'-the-Wisp is seized with a longing to see his family, and so returns to it and gives the matter up, it is over with him likewise, and he can no longer burn clear, and soon becomes extinguished, and cannot be lit up again; and when the year has elapsed, and he has not led three hundred and sixty-five people away from the truth and from all that is grand and noble, he is condemned to be imprisoned in decayed wood, and to lie glimmering there without being able to move; and that 's the most terrible punishment that can be inflicted on a lively Will-o'-the-Wisp.

"Now, all this I know, and all this I told to the twelve little Will-o'-the-Wisps whom I had on my lap, and who seemed quite crazy with joy.

"I told them that the safest and the most convenient course was to give up the honour, and do nothing at all; but the little flames would not agree to this, and already fancied themselves clad in fiery yellow clothes, breathing flames from their throats.

"'Stay with us,' said some of the older ones.

"'Carry on your sport with mortals,' said the others.

"'The mortals are drying up our meadows; they 've taken to draining. What will our successors do?'

"'We want to flame; we will flame—flame!' cried the new-born Will-o'-the-Wisps.

"And thus the affair was settled.

"And now a ball was given, a minute long; it could not well be

shorter. The little elf maidens whirled round three times with the rest, that they might not appear proud, but they preferred dancing with one another.

"And now the sponsors' gifts were presented, and presents were thrown them. These presents flew like pebbles across the sea-water. Each of the elf maidens gave a little piece of her veil.

"'Take that,' they said, 'and then you 'll know the higher dance, the most difficult turns and twists—that is to say, if you should find them necessary. You 'll know the proper deportment, and then you can show yourself in the very pick of society.'

"The night raven taught each of the young Will-o'-the-Wisps to say,

KING WALDEMAR'S GIFT.

'Goo—goo—good,' and to say it in the right place; and that 's a great gift, which brings its own reward.

"The owl and the stork——but they said it was not worth mentioning, and so we won't mention it.

"*King Waldemar's wild chase* was just then rushing over the moor, and when the great lords heard of the festivities that were going on, they sent a couple of handsome dogs which hunt on the spoom of the wind, as a present; and these might carry two or three of the Will-o'-the-Wisps. A couple of old Alpas, spirits who occupy themselves with Alp-pressing, were also at the feast; and from these the young Will-o'-the-Wisps learned the art of slipping through every key-hole, as if the door stood open before them. These Alpas offered to carry the young-

sters to the town, with which they were well acquainted. They usually rode through the atmosphere on their own back hair, which is fastened into a knot, for they love a hard seat; but now they sat sideways on the wild hunting dogs, took the young Will-o'-the-Wisps in their laps, who wanted to go into the town to mislead and entice mortals, and, whisk! away they were. Now, this is what happened last night. To-day the Will-o'-the-Wisps are in the town, and have taken the matter in hand—but where and how? Ah, can you tell me that? Still, I've a lightning conductor in my great toe, and that will always tell me something."

"Why, this is a complete story," exclaimed the man.

"Yes, but it is only the beginning," replied the woman. "Can you tell me how the Will-o'-the-Wisps deport themselves, and how they behave? and in what shapes they have aforetime appeared and led people into crooked paths?"

"I believe," replied the man, "that one could tell quite a romance about the Will-o'-the-Wisps, in twelve parts; or, better still, one might make quite a popular play of them."

"You might write that," said the woman, "but it's best let alone."

"Yes, that's better and more agreeable," the man replied, "for then we shall escape from the newspapers, and not be tied up by them, which is just as uncomfortable as for a Will-o'-the-Wisp to lie in decaying wood, to have to gleam, and not be able to stir."

"I don't care about it either way," cried the woman. "Let the rest write, those who can, and those who cannot likewise. I'll give you an old bung from my cask, that will open the cupboard where poetry's kept in bottles, and you may take from that whatever may be wanting. But you, my good man, seem to have blotted your hands sufficiently with ink, and to have come to that age of satiety, that you need not be running about every year for stories, especially as there are much more important things to be done. You must have understood what is going on?"

"The Will-o'-the-Wisp is in the town," said the man. "I've heard it, and I have understood it. But what do you think I ought to do? I should be thrashed if I were to go to the people and say, 'Look, yonder goes a Will-o'-the-Wisp in his best clothes!'"

"They also go in undress," replied the woman. "The Will-o'-the-Wisp can assume all kinds of forms, and appear in every place. He goes into the church, but not for the sake of the service; and perhaps he may enter into one or other of the priests. He speaks in the Parliament, not for the benefit of the country, but only for himself. He's an artist with the colour-pot as well as in the theatre, but when

he gets all the power into his own hands, then the pot 's empty! I chatter and chatter, but it must come out, what 's sticking in my throat, to the disadvantage of my own family. But I must now be the woman that will save a good many people. It is not done with my good will, or for the sake of a medal. I do the most insane things I possibly can, and then I tell a poet about it, and thus the whole town comes to know of it directly."

"The town will not take that to heart," observed the man; "that will not disturb a single person; for they will all think I 'm only telling them a story if I say, 'The Will-o'-the-Wisp is in the town, says the moor-woman. Take care of yourselves!' "

THE PROUD WINDMILL.

THE WINDMILL.

A WINDMILL stood upon the hill, proud to look at, and it was proud too.

"I am not proud at all," it said, "but I am very much enlightened without and within. I have sun and moon for my outward use, and for inward use too; and into the bargain I have stearine candles, train oil lamps, and tallow candles; I may well say that I 'm enlightened. I am

a thinking being, and so well constructed that it's quite delightful. I have a good windpipe in my chest, and I have four wings that are placed outside my head, just beneath my hat; the birds have only two wings, and are obliged to carry them on their backs. I am a Dutchman by birth, that may be seen by my figure—a flying Dutchman. They are considered supernatural beings, I know, and yet I am quite natural. I have a gallery round my chest, and house-room beneath it; that's where my thoughts dwell. My strongest thought, who rules and reigns, is called by the others 'the man in the mill.' He knows what he wants, and is lord over the meal and the bran; but he has his companion too, and she calls herself 'Mother.' She is the very heart of me. She does not run about stupidly and awkwardly, for she knows what she wants, she knows what she can do, she's as soft as a zephyr and as strong as a storm; she knows how to begin a thing carefully, and to have her own way. She is my soft temper, and the father is my hard one: they are two, and yet one; they each call the other 'My half.' These two have some little boys, young thoughts, that can grow. The little ones keep everything in order. When, lately, in my wisdom, I let the father and the boys examine my throat and the hole in my chest, to see what was going on there—for something in me was out of order, and it's well to examine one's self—the little ones made a tremendous noise. The youngest jumped up into my hat, and shouted so there that it tickled me. The little thoughts may grow; I know that very well; and out in the world thoughts come too, and not only of my kind, for as far as I can see I cannot discern anything like myself; but the wingless houses, whose throats make no noise, have thoughts too, and these come to my thoughts, and make love to them, as it is called. It's wonderful enough—yes, there are many wonderful things. Something has come over me, or into me,—something has changed in the mill-work: it seems as if the one-half, the father, had altered, and had received a better temper and a more affectionate helpmate—so young and good, and yet the same, only more gentle and good through the course of time. What was bitter has passed away, and the whole is much more comfortable.

"The days go on, and the days come nearer and nearer to clearness and to joy; and then a day will come when it will be over with me; but not over altogether. I must be pulled down that I may be built up again; I shall cease, but yet shall live on. To become quite a different being, and yet remain the same! That's difficult for me to understand, however enlightened I may be with sun, moon, stearine, train oil, and tallow. My old wood-work and my old brick-work will rise again from the dust!

"I will hope that I may keep my old thoughts, the father in the mill, and the mother, great ones and little ones—the family; for I call them all, great and little, the *company of thoughts*, because I must, and cannot refrain from it.

"And I must also remain 'myself,' with my throat in my chest, my

EXAMINING THE MILL.

wings on my head, the gallery round my body; else I should not know myself, nor could the others know me, and say, 'There 's the mill on the hill, proud to look at, and yet not proud at all.'"

That is what the mill said. Indeed, it said much more, but that is the most important part.

And the days came, and the days went, and yesterday was the last day.

Then the mill caught fire. The flames rose up high, and beat out and in, and bit at the beams and planks, and ate them up. The mill fell, and nothing remained of it but a heap of ashes. The smoke drove across the scene of the conflagration, and the wind carried it away.

Whatever had been alive in the mill remained, and what had been gained by it has nothing to do with this story.

The miller's family—one soul, many thoughts, and yet only one—built a new, a splendid mill, which answered its purpose. It was quite like the old one, and people said, "Why, yonder is the mill on the hill, proud to look at!" But this mill was better arranged, more according to the time than the last, so that progress might be made. The old beams had become worm-eaten and spongy—they lay in dust and ashes. The body of the mill did not rise out of the dust as they had believed it would do: they had taken it literally, and all things are *not* to be taken literally.

IN THE NURSERY.

Father, and mother, and brothers, and sisters, were gone to the play; only little Anna and her grandpapa were left at home.

"We 'll have a play, too," he said; "and it may begin immediately."

"But we have no theatre," cried little Anna, "and we have no one to act for us; my old doll cannot, for she is a fright, and my new one cannot, for she must not rumple her new clothes."

"One can always get actors if one makes use of what one has," observed grandpapa.

"Now we 'll go into the theatre. Here we will put up a book, there another, and there a third, in a sloping row. Now three on the other side; so, now we have the side-scenes. The old box that lies yonder may be the back stairs; and we 'll lay the flooring on top of it. The stage represents a room, as every one may see. Now we want the actors. Let us see what we can find in the plaything box. First the personages, and then we will get the play ready: one after the other, that will be capital! Here 's a pipe-head, and yonder an odd glove; they will do very well for father and daughter."

"But those are only two characters," said little Anna. "Here 's my brother's old waistcoat—could not that play in our piece, too?"

"It 's big enough, certainly," replied grandpapa. "It shall be the

lover. There is nothing in the pockets, and that 's very interesting, for that 's half of an unfortunate attachment. And here we have the nut-crackers' boots, with spurs to them. Row, dow, dow! how they can stamp and strut! They shall represent the unwelcome wooer, whom the lady does not like. What kind of play will you have now? Shall it be a tragedy, or a domestic drama?"

"A domestic drama, please," said little Anna; "for the others are so fond of that. Do you know one?"

"I know a hundred," said grandpapa. "Those that are most in favour are from the French, but they are not good for little girls. In the

THE PLAY.

meantime, we may take one of the prettiest, for inside they 're all very much alike. Now I shake the pen! Cock-a-lorum! So now, here 's the play, brin-bran-span new! Now listen to the play-bill."

And grandpapa took a newspaper, and read as if he were reading from it:

THE PIPE-HEAD AND THE GOOD HEAD.

A Family Drama in one Act.

CHARACTERS.

MR. PIPE-HEAD, *a father,* MR. WAISTCOAT, *a lover,*
MISS GLOVE, *a daughter,* MR. DE BOOTS, *a suitor.*

"And now we're going to begin. The curtain rises: we have no curtain, so it has risen already. All the characters are there, and so we

have them at hand. Now I speak as Papa Pipe-head; he 's angry to-day. One can see that he 's a coloured meerschaum.

"'Snik, snak, snurre, bassellure! I 'm master of this house! I 'm the father of my daughter! Will you hear what I have to say? Mr. de Boots is a person in whom one may see one's face; his upper part is of morocco, and he has spurs into the bargain. Snikke, snakke, snak! He shall have my daughter!'

"Now listen to what the Waistcoat says, little Anna," said grandpapa. "Now the Waistcoat 's speaking. The Waistcoat has a lay-down collar, and is very modest; but he knows his own value, and has quite a right to say what he says:

"'I haven't a spot on me! Goodness of material ought to be appreciated. I am of real silk, and have strings to me.'

"'—On the wedding day, but no longer; you don't keep your colour in the wash.' This is Mr. Pipe-head who is speaking. 'Mr. de Boots is water-tight, of strong leather, and yet very delicate; he can creak, and clank with his spurs, and has an Italian physiognomy—'"

"But they ought to speak in verses," said Anna, "for I 've heard that 's the most charming way of all."

"They can do that, too," replied grandpapa; "and if the public demands it, they will talk in that way. Just look at little Miss Glove, how she 's pointing her fingers:

"'Could I but have my love,
Who then so happy as Glove!
Ah!
If I from him must part,
I 'm sure 't will break my heart!'
"'Bah!'

"That last word was spoken by Mr. Pipe-head; and now it 's Mr. Waistcoat's turn:

"'O Glove, my own dear,
Though it cost thee a tear,
Thou must be mine,
For Holger Danske has sworn it!'

"Mr. de Boots, hearing this, kicks up, jingles his spurs, and knocks down three of the side-scenes."

"That 's exceedingly charming!" cried little Anna.

"Silence! silence!" said grandpapa. "Silent approbation will show that you are the educated public in the stalls. Now Miss Glove sings her great song with startling effects:

"'I can't see, heigho!
And therefore I 'll crow!
Kikkeriki, in the lofty hall!'

"Now comes the exciting part, little Anna. This is the most important in all the play. Mr. Waistcoat undoes himself, and addresses his speech to you, that you may applaud; but leave it alone,—that's considered more genteel.

"'I am driven to extremities! Take care of yourself! Now comes the plot! You are the Pipe-head, and I am the good head—snap! there you go!'

"Do you notice this, little Anna?" asked grandpapa. "That's a most charming scene and comedy. Mr. Waistcoat seized the old Pipe-head, and put him in his pocket; there he lies, and the Waistcoat says:

"'You are in my pocket; you can't come out till you promise to unite me to your daughter Glove on the left: I hold out my right hand.'"

"That's awfully pretty," said little Anna.

"And now the old Pipe-head replies:

"'Though I'm all ear,
Very stupid I appear:
Where's my humour? Gone, I fear,
And I fear my hollow stick's not here.
Ah! never, my dear,
Did I feel so queer.
Oh! pray let me out,
And, like a lamb led to slaughter
I'll betroth you, no doubt,
To my daughter.'"

"Is the play over already?" asked little Anna.

"By no means," replied grandpapa. "It's only all over with Mr. de Boots. Now the lovers kneel down, and one of them sings:

"'Father!'

and the other,

"'Come, do as you ought to do,—
Bless your son and daughter.'

"And they receive his blessing, and celebrate their wedding, and all the pieces of furniture sing in chorus,

"'Klink! clanks!
A thousand thanks;
And now the play is over!'

"And now we'll applaud," said grandpapa. "We'll call them all out, and the pieces of furniture too, for they are of mahogany."

"And is not our play just as good as those which the others have in the real theatre?"

"Our play is much better," said grandpapa. "It is shorter, the performers are natural, and it has passed away the interval before tea-time."

PETER'S MOTHER.

THE GOLDEN TREASURE.

THE drummer's wife went into the church. She saw the new altar with the painted pictures and the carved angels: those upon the canvas and in the glory over the altar were just as beautiful as the carved ones; and they were painted and gilt into the bargain. Their hair gleamed golden in the sunshine, lovely to behold; but the real sunshine was more beautiful still. It shone redder, clearer through the dark trees, when the sun went down. It was lovely thus to look at the sunshine of heaven. And she looked at the red sun, and she thought about it so deeply, and thought of the little one whom the stork was to bring; and the wife of the drummer was very cheerful, and looked and looked, and wished that the child might have a gleam of sunshine given to it, so that it might at least become like one of the shining angels over the altar.

And when she really had the little child in her arms, and held it up to its father, then it was like one of the angels in the church to behold, with hair like gold—the gleam of the setting sun was upon it.

"My golden treasure, my riches, my sunshine," said the mother; and she kissed the shining locks, and it sounded like music and song in the room of the drummer; and there was joy, and life, and movement. The drummer beat a roll—a roll of joy. And the Drum said, the Fire-drum, that was beaten when there was a fire in the town:

"Red hair! the little fellow has red hair! Believe the Drum, and not what your mother says! Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub!"

And the town repeated what the Fire-drum had said.

The boy was taken to church, the boy was christened. There was nothing much to be said about his name; he was called Peter. The whole town, and the Drum too, called him Peter the drummer's boy with the red hair; but his mother kissed his red hair, and called him her golden treasure.

In the hollow way, in the clayey bank, many had scratched their names as a remembrance.

"Celebrity is always something!" said the drummer; and so he scratched his own name there, and his little son's name likewise.

And the swallows came: they had, on their long journey, seen more durable characters engraven on rocks, and on the walls of the temples in Hindostan, mighty deeds of great kings, immortal names, so old that no one now could read or speak them. Remarkable celebrity!

In the clayey bank the martens built their nest: they bored holes in the deep declivity, and the splashing rain and the thin mist came and crumbled and washed the names away, and the drummer's name also, and that of his little son.

"Peter's name will last a full year and a half longer!" said the father.

"Fool!" thought the Fire-drum; but it only said, "Dub, dub, dub, rub-a-dub!"

He was a boy full of life and gladness, this drummer's son with the red hair. He had a lovely voice: he could sing, and he sang like a bird in the woodland. There was melody, and yet no melody.

"He must become a chorister boy," said his mother. "He shall sing in the church, and stand among the beautiful gilded angels who are like him!"

"Fiery cat!" said some of the witty ones of the town. The Drum heard that from the neighbours' wives.

"Don't go home, Peter," cried the street boys. "If you sleep in the garret there 'll be a fire in the house, and the fire-drum will have to be beaten."

"Look out for the drum-sticks," replied Peter; and, small as he was, he ran up boldly, and gave the foremost such a punch in the body with his fist, that the fellow lost his legs and tumbled over, and the others took their legs off with themselves very rapidly.

The town musician was very genteel and fine. He was the son of a royal plate-washer. He was very fond of Peter, and would sometimes take him to his home, and gave him a violin, and taught him to play it.

It seemed as if the whole art lay in the boy's fingers; and he wanted to be more than a drummer—he wanted to become musician to the town.

"I 'll be a soldier," said Peter, for he was still quite a little lad, and it seemed to him the finest thing in the world to carry a gun, and to be able to march "one, two; one, two," and to wear a uniform and a sword.

"Ah, you learn to long for the drum-skin, drum, dum, dum!" said the Drum.

"Yes, if he could only march his way up to a general!" observed his father; "but before he can do that there must be war."

PETER SINGING.

"Heaven forbid!" said his mother.

"We have nothing to lose," remarked the father.

"Yes, we have my boy," she retorted.

"But suppose he came back a general," said the father.

"Without arms and legs!" cried the mother. "No, I would rather keep my golden treasure with me."

"Drum, dum, dum!" The Fire-drum and all the other drums were beating, for war had come. The soldiers all set out, and the son of the drummer followed them. "Red-head. Golden treasure!"

The mother wept; the father in fancy saw him "famous;" the town musician was of opinion that he ought not to go to war, but should stay at home and learn music.

"Red-head!" said the soldiers, and little Peter laughed; but when one of them sometimes said to another "Foxey," he would bite his teeth together and look another way—into the wide world: he did not care for the nickname.

The boy was active, pleasant of speech, and good humoured; and that is the best canteen, said his old comrades.

And many a night he had to sleep under the open sky, wet through with the driving rain or the falling mist; but his good humour never forsook him. The drum-sticks sounded, "Rub-a-dub, all up, all up!" Yes, he was certainly born to be a drummer.

The day of battle dawned. The sun had not yet risen, but the morning was come. The air was cold, the battle was hot, there was mist in the air, but still more gunpowder smoke. The bullets and shells flew over the soldiers' heads, and into their heads, into their bodies and limbs; but still they pressed forward. Here or there one or other of them would sink on his knees, with bleeding temples, and a face as white as chalk. The little drummer still kept his healthy colour; he had suffered no damage; he looked cheerfully at the dog of the regiment, which was jumping along as merrily as if the whole thing had been got up for his amusement, and as if the bullets were only flying about that he might have a game of play with them.

"March! Forward! March!" This was the word of command for the drum. The word had not yet been given to fall back, though they might have done so, and perhaps there would have been much sense in it; and now at last the word "Retire" was given; but our little drummer beat "Forward! march!" for he had understood the command thus, and the soldiers obeyed the sound of the drum. That was a good roll, and proved the summons to victory for the men, who had already begun to give way.

Life and limb was lost in the battle. Bombshells tore away the flesh in red strips; bombshells lit up into a terrible glow the straw heaps to which the wounded had dragged themselves, to lie untended for many hours, perhaps for all the hours they had to live.

It's no use thinking of it! and yet one cannot help thinking of it, even far away in the peaceful town. The drummer and his wife also thought of it, for Peter was at the war.

"Now, I'm tired of these complaints," said the Fire-drum.

Again the day of battle dawned; the sun had not yet risen, but it

was morning. The drummer and his wife were asleep: they had been talking about their son, as, indeed, they did almost every night, for he was out yonder, in God's hand. And the father dreamt that the war was over, that the soldiers had returned home, and that Peter wore a silver cross on his breast. But the mother dreamt that she had gone into the church, and had seen the painted pictures and the carved angels with the gilded hair, and her own dear boy, the golden treasure of her heart, who was standing among the angels in white robes, singing so sweetly, as surely only the angels can sing; and that he had soared up with them into the sunshine, and nodded so kindly at his mother.

"My golden treasure!" she cried out; and she awoke. "Now the good God has taken him to Himself!" She folded her hands, and hid her face in the cotton curtains of the bed, and wept. "Where does he rest now, among the many in the big grave that they have dug for the dead? Perhaps he is in the water of the marsh! Nobody knows his grave; no holy words have been read over it!" And the Lord's Prayer went inaudibly over her lips; she bowed her head, and was so weary that she went to sleep.

And the days went by, in life as in dreams!

It was evening: over the battle-field a rainbow spread, which touched the forest and the deep marsh.

It has been said, and is preserved in popular belief, that where the rainbow touches the earth a treasure lies buried, a golden treasure; and here there was one. No one but his mother thought of the little drummer, and therefore she dreamt of him.

And the days went by, in life as in dreams.

Not a hair of his head had been hurt, not a golden hair.

"Drum-ma-rum! drum-ma-rum! there he is!" the Drum might have said, and his mother might have sung, if she had seen or dreamt it.

With hurrah and song, adorned with green wreaths of victory, they came home, as the war was at an end, and peace had been signed. The dog of the regiment sprang on in front with large bounds, and made the way three times as long for himself as it really was.

And days and weeks went by, and Peter came into his parents' room: he was as brown as a wild man, and his eyes were bright, and his face beamed like sunshine. And his mother held him in her arms; she kissed his lips, his forehead, his red hair. She had her boy back again; he had not a silver cross on his breast, as his father had dreamt, but he had sound limbs, a thing the mother had not dreamt. And what a rejoicing was there! They laughed and they wept; and Peter embraced the old Fire-drum.

PETER'S RETURN.

"There stands the old skeleton still!" he said.

And the father beat a roll upon it.

"One would think that a great fire had broken out here," said the Fire-drum. "Bright day! fire in the heart! golden treasure! skrat! skr-r-at! skr-r-r-r-at!"

And what then? What then?—Ask the town musician.

"Peter's far outgrowing the drum," he said. "Peter will be greater than I."

And yet he was the son of a royal plate-washer; but all that he had learned in half a lifetime, Peter learned in half a year.

There was something so merry about him, something so truly kind-hearted. His eyes gleamed, and his hair gleamed too—there was no denying that!

"He ought to have his hair dyed," said the neighbour's wife. "That answered capitally with the policeman's daughter, and she soon got a husband."

"But her hair turned as green as duckweed, and was always having to be coloured up."

"She knows how to manage for herself," said the neighbours, "and so can Peter. He comes to the most genteel houses, even to the burgomaster's, where he gives Miss Charlotte pianoforte lessons."

He *could* play! He could play, fresh out of his heart, the most charming pieces, that had never yet been put upon music-paper. He played in the bright nights, and in the dark nights too. The neighbours declared it was unbearable, and the Fire-drum was of the same opinion.

He played until his thoughts soared up, and burst forth in great plans for the future. "To be famous!"

And burgomaster's Charlotte sat at the piano. Her delicate fingers danced over the keys, and made them ring into Peter's heart. It seemed too much for him to bear; and this happened not once, but many times; and at last one day he seized the delicate fingers and the white hand, and kissed it, and looked into her great brown eyes. Heaven knows what he said; but we may be allowed to guess at it. Charlotte blushed to guess at it. She reddened from brow to neck, and answered not a single word; and then strangers came into the room, and one of them was the state councillor's son: he had a lofty white forehead, and carried it so high that it seemed to go back into his neck. And Peter sat by her a long time, and she looked at him with gentle eyes.

At home that evening he spoke of travel in the wide world, and of the golden treasure that lay hidden for him in his violin.

"To be famous!"

"Tum-me-lum, tum-me-lum, tum-me-lum!" said the Fire-drum. "Peter has gone clean out of his wits. I think there must be a fire in the house."

Next day the mother went to market.

"Shall I tell you news, Peter?" she asked when she came home. "A capital piece of news. Burgomaster's Charlotte has engaged herself to the state councillor's son; the betrothal took place yesterday evening."

"No!" cried Peter, and he sprang up from his chair. But his mother persisted in saying "Yes." She had heard it from the baker's wife, whose husband had it from the burgomaster's own mouth.

And Peter became as pale as death, and sat down again.

"Good Heaven! what's the matter with you?" asked his mother.

PETER'S GRIEF.

"Nothing, nothing; only leave me to myself," he answered, but the tears were running down his cheeks.

"My sweet child, my golden treasure!" cried the mother, and she wept; but the Fire-drum sang—not out loud, but inwardly,

"Charlotte's gone! Charlotte's gone! and now the song is done."

But the song was not done; there were many more verses in it, long verses, the most beautiful verses, the golden treasures of a life.

"She behaves like a mad woman," said the neighbour's wife. "All the world is to see the letters she gets from her golden treasure, and to read the words that are written in the papers about his violin playing. And he sends her money too, and that's very useful to her since she has been a widow."

"He plays before emperors and kings," said the town musician. "I never had that fortune; but he's my pupil, and he does not forget his old master."

And his mother said,

"His father dreamt that Peter came home from the war with a silver cross. He did not gain one in the war; but it is still more difficult to gain one in this way. Now he has the cross of honour. If his father had only lived to see it!"

"He's grown famous!" said the Fire-drum; and all his native town said the same thing, for the drummer's son, Peter with the red hair—Peter whom they had known as a little boy, running about in wooden shoes, and then as a drummer, playing for the dancers—was become famous!

"He played at our house before he played in the presence of kings," said the burgomaster's wife. "At that time he was quite smitten with Charlotte. He was always of an aspiring turn. At that time he was saucy and an enthusiast. My husband laughed when he heard of the foolish affair, and now our Charlotte's a state councillor's wife."

A golden treasure had been hidden in the heart and soul of the poor child, who had beaten the roll as a drummer—a roll of victory for those who had been ready to retreat. There was a golden treasure in his bosom, the power of sound: it burst forth on his violin as if the instrument had been a complete organ, and as if all the elves of a midsummer night were dancing across the strings. In its sounds were heard the piping of the thrush and the full clear note of the human voice; therefore the sound brought rapture to every heart, and carried his name triumphant through the land. That was a great firebrand—the firebrand of inspiration.

"And then he looks so splendid!" said the young ladies and the old ladies too; and the oldest of all procured an album for famous locks of hair, wholly and solely that she might beg a lock of his rich splendid hair, that treasure, that golden treasure.

And the son came into the poor room of the drummer, elegant as a prince, happier than a king. His eyes were as clear and his face was as radiant as sunshine; and he held his mother in his arms, and she kissed his mouth, and wept as blissfully as any one can weep for joy; and he nodded at every old piece of furniture in the room, at the cupboard with the tea-cups, and at the flower-vase. He nodded at the sleeping-bench, where he had slept as a little boy; but the old Fire-drum he brought out, and dragged it into the middle of the room, and said to it and to his mother:

"My father would have beaten a famous roll this evening. Now I must do it!"

And he beat a thundering roll-call on the instrument, and the Drum felt so highly honoured that the parchment burst with exultation.

"He has a splendid touch!" said the Drum. "I've a remembrance of him now that will last. I expect that the same thing will happen to his mother, from pure joy over her golden treasure."

And this is the story of the golden treasure.

THE STORM SHAKES THE SHIELD.

In the old days, when grandpapa was quite a little boy, and ran about in little red breeches and a red coat, and a feather in his cap—for that's the costume the little boys wore in his time when they were dressed in their best—many things were very different from what they are now: there was often a good deal of show in the streets—show that we don't see nowadays, because it has been abolished as too old-fashioned: still, it is very interesting to hear grandfather tell about it.

It must really have been a gorgeous sight to behold, in those days, when the shoemaker brought over the shield, when the court-house was changed. The silken flag waved to and fro, on the shield itself a double eagle was displayed, and a big boot; the youngest lads carried the "welcome," and the chest of the workmen's guild, and their shirt-sleeves were adorned with red and white ribbons; the elder ones carried drawn swords, each with a lemon stuck on its point. There was a full band of music, and the most splendid of all the instruments was the "bird," as grandfather called the big stick with the crescent at the top, and all manner of dingle dangles hanging to it, a perfect Turkish clatter of music. The stick was lifted high in the air, and swung up and down till it jingled again, and quite dazzled one's eyes when the sun shone on all its glory of gold, and silver, and brass.

In front of the procession ran the Harlequin, dressed in clothes made of all kinds of coloured patches artfully sewn together, with a black face, and bells on his head like a sledge horse: he beat the people with his hat, which made a great clattering without hurting them, and the people would crowd together, and fall back, only to advance again the next moment. Little boys and girls fell over their own toes into the gutter,

old women dispensed digs with their elbows, and looked sour, and took snuff. One laughed, another chatted; the people thronged the windows and door-steps, and even all the roofs. The sun shone; and although they had a little rain too, that was good for the farmer; and when they got wetted thoroughly, they only thought what a blessing it was for the country.

And what stories grandpapa could tell! As a little boy he had seen all these fine doings in their greatest pomp. The oldest of the policemen used to make a speech from the platform on which the shield was hung up, and the speech was in verses, as if it had been made by a poet, as,

HOW GRANDPAPA LOOKED WHEN A BOY.

indeed, it had; for three people had concocted it together, and they had first drunk a good bowl of punch, so that the speech might turn out well.

And the people gave a cheer for the speech, but they shouted much louder for the Harlequin when he appeared in front of the platform and made a grimace at them.

The fools played the fool most admirably, and drank mead out of spirit-glasses, which they then flung among the crowd, by whom they were caught up. Grandfather was the possessor of one of these glasses, which had been given him by a working mason, who had managed to catch it. Such a scene was really very pleasant; and the shield on the new court-house was hung with flowers and green wreaths.

"One never forgets a feast like that, however old one may grow," said

grandfather. Nor did he forget it, though he saw many other grand spectacles in his time, and could tell about them too; but it was most pleasant of all to hear him tell about the shield that was brought in the town from the old to the new court-house.

Once, when he was a little boy, grandpapa had gone with his parents to see this festivity. He had never yet been in the metropolis of the country. There were so many people in the streets, that he thought that the shield was being carried. There were many shields to be seen; a hundred rooms might have been filled with pictures, if they had been hung up inside and outside. At the tailor's were pictures of all kinds of clothing, to show that he could stitch up people from the coarsest to the finest; at the tobacco manufacturer's were pictures of the most charming little boys, smoking cigars, just as they do in reality; there were signs with painted butter and herrings, clerical collars, and coffins, and inscriptions and announcements into the bargain. A person could walk up and down for a whole day through the streets, and tire himself out with looking at the pictures; and then he would know all about what people lived in the houses, for they had hung out their shields or signs; and, as grandfather said, it was a very instructive thing, in a great town, to know at once who the inhabitants were.

And this is what happened with these shields, when grandpapa came to town. He told it me himself, and he hadn't "a rogue on his back," as mother used to tell me he had when he wanted to make me believe something outrageous, for he now looked quite trustworthy.

The first night after he came to the town had been signalized by the most terrible gale ever recorded in the newspapers, a gale such as none of the inhabitants had ever before experienced. The air was dark with flying tiles; old wood-work crashed and fell; and a wheelbarrow ran up the street all alone, only to get out of the way. There was a groaning in the air, and a howling and a shrieking, and altogther it was a terrible storm. The water in the canal rose over the banks, for it did not know where to run. The storm swept over the town, carrying plenty of chimneys with it, and more than one proud weathercock on a church tower had to bow, and has never got over it from that time.

There was a kind of sentry-house, where dwelt the venerable old superintendent of the fire brigade, who always arrived with the last engine. The storm would not leave this little sentry-house alone, but must needs tear it from its fastenings, and roll it down the street; and, wonderfully enough, it stopped opposite to the door of the dirty journeyman plasterer, who had saved three lives at the last fire, but the sentry-house thought nothing of that.

The barber's shield, the great brazen dish, was carried away, and hurled straight into the embrasure of the councillor of justice; and the whole neighbourhood said this looked almost like malice, inasmuch as they, and nearly all the friends of the councillor's wife, used to call that lady "the Razor;" for she was so sharp that she knew more about other people's business than they knew about it themselves.

A shield with a dried salt fish painted on it flew exactly in front of the door of a house where dwelt a man who wrote a newspaper. That was a very poor joke perpetrated by the gale, which seemed to have forgotten that a man who writes in a paper is not the kind of person to understand any liberty taken with him; for he is a king in his own newspaper, and likewise in his own opinion.

The weathercock flew to the opposite house, where he perched, looking the picture of malice—so the neighbours said.

The cooper's tub stuck itself up under the head of "ladies' costumes."

The eating-house keeper's bill of fare, which had hung at his door in a heavy frame, was posted by the storm over the entrance to the theatre, where nobody went: it was a ridiculous list—"Horse-radish, soup, and stuffed cabbage." And now people came in plenty.

The fox's skin, the honourable sign of the furrier, was found fastened to the bell-pull of a young man who always went to early lecture, and looked like a furled umbrella, and said he was striving after truth, and was considered by his aunt "a model and an example."

The inscription "Institution for superior education" was found near the billiard club, which place of resort was further adorned with the words "Children brought up by hand." Now, this was not at all witty; but, you see, the storm had done it, and no one has any control over that.

It was a terrible night, and in the morning—only think!—nearly all the shields had changed places: in some places the inscriptions were so malicious, that grandfather would not speak of them at all; but I saw that he was chuckling secretly, and there may have been some inaccuracy in his description, after all.

The poor people in the town, and still more the strangers, were continually making mistakes in the people they wanted to see; nor was this to be avoided, when they went according to the shields that were hung up. Thus, for instance, some who wanted to go to a very grave assembly of elderly men, where important affairs were to be discussed, found themselves in a noisy boys' school, where all the company were leaping over the chairs and tables.

There were also people who made a mistake between the church and the theatre, and that was terrible indeed!

Such a storm we have never witnessed in our day; for that only happened in grandpapa's time, when he was quite a little boy. Perhaps we shall never experience a storm of the kind, but our grandchildren may; and we can only hope and pray that all may *stay at home while the storm is moving the shields.*

THE LEGEND OF NÜRNBERG CASTLE.

The custodian of the castle was conducting me through the place, repeating names and dates, and his little boy was following us, but stopping every now and then to play in a window. I should have preferred to sit confidentially with the little lad, and let him tell me truth or dreams; for, after all, most of the stories our elders give us and call "historical" are but dreams when all is done. I should have liked to stand with him, in a moonlight night, and look out over the old Gothic town, whose towers point up at the stars, as if to tell the shining specks to look down on the plain, where now the postboy's horn is sounding, but where, once on a time, Wallenstein's trumpeters sounded the charge. In the mists that float over the wide expanse I should behold the Swedish troopers who fought for the Protestant faith.

I should like to sit with the little lad under the linden tree, and repeat with him what the legend tells of Eppelin, the wild knight of Garlingen. From his castle Eppelin watched for every caravan of Nürnberg merchants who travelled to that city with their wares; and then he would swoop down like a falcon on his prey. But the falcon was caught, the wild knight languished in this castle, where the linden tree is growing still. The day came on which he was to die; and, according to the gallant old custom, it was permitted him, as a man condemned to death, to ask that a wish should be granted him; and the wish of the knight was, that he might bestride his gallant horse once more.

The good steed neighed for joy, and proudly carried his master round the narrow courtyard, and the knight patted his strong smooth neck; and the noble beast's muscles seemed to swell, and its hoofs beat the pavement impatiently. And it careered round in a circle, ever faster and faster, so that the gaolers and armed guards were obliged to press close to the walls, to leave room for it. But they had no suspicion, for they

knew that the castle gate was securely fastened, and that there was no escape for the knight. "But if they could have read what stood written in the horse's eyes," says the chronicle, "they would have stopped its career and bound the wild knight's hands." And what stood written in the horse's eyes? They spoke in dumb but fiery language:

"In this wretched courtyard thy knightly blood may not flow! Here

THE KNIGHT'S ESCAPE.

may not end thy merry, active life! Shall I not further bear thee into the raging battle, through the deep defiles, and the merry green forest? Shall I no more eat food from thy gallant hand? Trust to my tremendous strength, and I will save thee!"

And the horse rose as though for a spring. The knight struck the spurs into its flanks, drew a deep breath, and bent forward over the creature's neck. Fire flashed from its hoofs; a bound, and, wonderful to relate, the horse had gained the crest of the outer wall; another, and horse and rider sprang across the deep moat, and were free!

And whenever the wind whistles through the linden tree, it tells the legend once more.

A NIGHT IN THE APENNINES.

Over the green, flat Lombard plains, rise the vine and forest-clad Apennines. The traveller who issues from the gates of Bologna, may fancy his road leads across the terraces of an immense ruined garden, like that which, as the legend tells us, the mighty Semiramis built.

It was in the middle of December. The stamp of the late autumn was upon all things. The leaves of the vines were red, the forest leaves were yellow, only the laurel hedges stood as green as ever; and the pine and cypress woods waved in undiminished splendour. Slowly we drove upward, ever upward: garlands of vine-leaves trailed down over ruined walls; we met teams of giant oxen, which had been used as a help for the horses: their white shining sides gleamed with a pinky tint in the setting sun.

Gradually, as we rose higher, the region became more desolate, and presently I went forward alone. The sun had set, and in a few moments a blue glimmer shone over the mountains; a glimmer in the atmosphere, which seemed to emanate from the hills themselves. Not a breath of air was stirring; everything was mild and still, and an aspect of majesty in the mountains and in the deep valleys attuned the soul to meditation. The loneliness of the valley gave it, I may not say a tone of melancholy, but rather an aspect of rest, as if Sleep were holding his court down there; for a feeling of rest and peace was spread on all things, heightened by the soft murmur of the river far beneath. The road wound round the mountain on which I was wandering; and presently I saw no carriage, no human being, nothing but the deep valley; I was alone, quite alone.

Night came on; the stars began to glitter. In our northern regions they shine brightest in the frosty winter night; but here, in the mountains, the sky seems much higher; and the distant vault looked transparent, as though another immeasurable space began behind it.

A ray of light presently pierced through the rocky distance. It came from a tavern built upon the mountain. In the open alcove a lamp had been lighted to the Madonna. The *camereire* or chamberlain was ready, in his white apron and velvet jacket, to receive us, the travellers. We were ushered into a great saloon, whose whitish-grey walls were covered with inscriptions in all the languages of Europe. It was cold and lonely enough; but great bundles of brushwood were thrown into the

fire-place, and set on fire, and we gathered in a circle about the blaze. Each one of our little party had something to tell, especially about the last great inundation from the river. After the smoking supper had been dispatched, each one sought his bed. Mine was in a somewhat distant room, large and lonely—a couch as broad as it was long: there was a little vessel of holy water at the bed-head, and on the wall were inscriptions, and among the rest one in Danish, a translation of the German popular song, "Enjoy life while it lasteth!"

So a countryman of mine had been here, and had written this. May his life be an enjoyable one!

A ricketty table and two rush-bottomed chairs formed the rest of the furniture.

I opened a window in front of which great iron bars had been fastened. The window looked out upon a deep valley. Below all was darkness. I could hear a stream rushing onward. Above me glittered the starry sky. I leaned my forehead against the iron bars, and did not feel more lonely than I had felt in my own little room in Denmark. He who has a home in his own country may feel home-sick, but he who possesses nothing is at home everywhere. In a few minutes my room here seemed to become a familiar home to me; but I did not yet know my neighbours.

Besides the common door, I noticed another—a smaller one, which was fastened by a bolt. Whither might this lead? What was behind this door? I took the five-wicked metal lamp, three wicks of which had been lighted. I kindled the other two, drew back the bolt, and went forth on a journey of discovery.

Beyond the door I found a kind of lumber-room. Here were chests, boxes, sacks, and great jars; and old clothes and guns hung upon the walls. But there was another door leading out of this room. I opened it, and stood in a long narrow passage; traversing this I stood before another door. Should I go farther? I stood still and listened. Suddenly I heard two sounds like notes played on a flute, one deep, the other high and piercing; after a pause they were repeated.

The longer I listened, the more I felt convinced that these sounds did not proceed from a flute. I lifted the latch, and the door flew open suddenly, much more suddenly than I had expected. The room was dimly lighted by a lamp, and an old peasant with long white hair was before me, sitting half undressed in an arm-chair, playing the flute.

I made an excuse for my intrusion, but he did not heed me. I shut the door and was about to retreat, when it was opened again by a young peasant lad, who asked me in a whisper whom I was seeking.

The old man whom I had seen was the uncle of the landlord, and had been of weak mind since his sixteenth year.

I will tell the few particulars I learned respecting his case. His illness had come upon him as though wafted towards him by the wind. No one could give any reason for it. As a boy he had played prettily upon the flute; but since a certain night he had never tried anything but two notes, one a deep and mournful one, and the other high and piercing. These notes he continually repeated, and sometimes played them at night for hours together. They had tried to take his flute from him, but then he would become as furious as a wild animal; though, when it was returned to him, he at once became calm and friendly. The

THE OLD PEASANT.

boy who spoke to me slept in the same room with the old man, and had become accustomed to the sound of the flute, as a man grows accustomed to the ticking of a clock, or the clang of a blacksmith's hammer, when the blacksmith has been his neighbour for years.

I went back to my room and locked the door; but the two notes of the flute rang in my ears: they sounded like the distant creaking of a weathercock turned by the wind. I could not sleep; my fancy was busy about the old man. I heard the flute tones sounding like notes from the spirit world, and thought how, when the old man is dead, the people of the house will hear these notes in imagination, as they now hear them in reality. At length, towards morning, I fell asleep, and I think I was

awakened within an hour; for we were to start before daybreak. It was still night when we sat once more in our carriage. The mountains lay before us, covered with snow, and seemed to glow hotly in the sunshine. Near Pietra Malas nothing is to be seen but naked wild rocks of volcanic origin; and the volcanoes are not yet extinct, for to the right a thick smoke comes whirling from the rocky clefts. This morning I beheld two seas like shining bands on the horizon: to the left the Adriatic, to the right the Mediterranean Sea. A strong wall has been built here close to the road, to give the passengers protection from the storm, which comes rushing from the east. Before this wall was erected, there were often days and nights in which none might wander here, for the angel of the storm was walking abroad over the mountains.

"The old man in the tavern," said our *vetturino*, "one night crawled across this mountain on all fours, so they say. I suppose he was not mad at that time. He wanted to go down on the opposite side of the mountain."

Again I thought of the old man, and of the tones of the flute. The road wound downwards in beautiful serpentine curves, over arches of masonry, always sheltered by the mountains, where the sun shone warm, where the snow had melted, and the trees appeared decked with leaves. "Beautiful Italy!" cried all rejoicingly. The *vetturino* cracked his whip, and the echoes cracked in reply far louder than he could do.

THE CARNIVAL IN ROME.

The circumstance which makes the Carnival in Rome more rich and lively than the same period in any other place, is the limitation of the festivities in the streets to six days, and to three hours on each day. Only the Corso and the side streets in its immediate neighbourhood present scenes for this popular festival. Everything is concentrated, time as well as place. The celebration here is like a flashing glass of champagne—the goblet foams, is immediately quaffed, and then follow the fasts.

Goethe has painted from the Romish Carnival, which presents the same features year after year, so charmingly, that no one could do it better; therefore a new description would be unnecessary. Nor am I

about to give one; only, to furnish a picture of Rome to a certain extent, I lay a short sketch here in my book: the particular circumstances belong to the Carnival of 1841.

Brave in purple and gold sits the senator in the Capitol, surrounded by pages in tawny liveries: a deputation of Jews appears before him with the petition that the community may be permitted to inhabit for another

IN THE STREETS.

year the quarters assigned to it in the Ghetto. The petition is granted: the senator seats himself in his state coach, the old bells of the Capitol are set ringing, and this is the sign that the Carnival may begin. The carriage proceeds at a foot pace towards the Piazza del Popolo, and behind it throng a mass of people from palaces, houses, and taverns. But everywhere the greatest order prevails; every lady can venture out without danger, in man's clothes, and nobody thinks of insulting her, or causing her embarrassment by the slightest gesture. It is amusing to

see how the poor people manage to procure a dress for the Carnival. They cover their own clothes completely with salad leaves, even to their shoes, and wear wigs of salad leaves on their heads; man and wife, and sometimes the children too, appear in a complete disguise of salad leaves. A pair of spectacles, manufactured from the peel of an orange, completes the costume, in which the poor couple may be seen marching down the Corso, with perfect gravity, and quite a royal bearing.

From the Piazza del Popolo the senator and his train proceed up the Corso. All the windows and balconies are here hung with tapestries of red, blue, and yellow silk; everywhere there is a throng of people, the majority of whom are in fancy dresses, with or without masks. In front of the houses, close to the walls, little cane seats or benches are ranged along, which are let out on hire, and on which the quieter people take up a position. One row of carriages drives up, and the other down; and often horses and carriages are adorned with fluttering ribbons and green boughs. Frequently the coachmen, old fellows with true Italian faces, are seen disguised as women, with a poodle, dressed as a baby or a girl, by their sides. Other carriages are metamorphosed into steamboats, with a crew of sailors, or girls, in uniform. When two such vehicles happen to meet, there is a grand fight, in which *confetti*, or sweetmeats, are showered down, not flung by the hand, but poured from Horns of Plenty. On the pavement, and even among the carriages, the great stream of life goes surging to and fro. When two Punchinellos or Harlequins happen to meet, they take each other's arm, and proceed together, shouting and screaming. Masks in similar costumes associate themselves together, and soon whole bands are seen making their way rejoicingly among carriages and pedestrians, like waterspouts whirling across a slightly agitated sea. At sundown cannon-shots are heard, and the carriages turn into the bye-streets at the signal; soldiers, who have been posted at a little distance from one another, now collect into bodies, and march down the street; the cavalry follows, at first slowly, the second time at a brisker pace, and the third time at full gallop; for this is a sign that the races are going to begin.

On the Piazza del Popolo lofty platforms have been erected. A rope is stretched across the road, and behind there are six or seven half-wild horses, with iron balls, garnished with spikes, dangling at their sides, and lighted tinder on their backs.

The rope falls to the ground, and away gallop the horses, the silken ribbons and the tinsel ornaments rattling and fluttering on their manes and tails. "*Cavalli! cavalli!*" is shouted in wildest clamour by the crowd, who make way for the approaching steeds, who rush onward,

maddened by the tumult: they rush past, and the dense masses of men close up behind them.

Before the horses have reached the goal, they are often so exhausted that they arrive at a gentle trot; nevertheless, the farther end of the street has been hung with great carpets, stretched across from house to house, at a little distance from each other. If the horses came storming along in ever such wild career, they would be effectually stopped by entangling themselves in these draperies.

AT THE BALCONIES.

A comic effect is produced when, just before the commencement of the race, a dog happens to slip into the space cleared in the street, and the people who are standing nearest set about hooting him; for the whole assembly follows the example thus set, and the unhappy dog is obliged to run the gauntlet through the whole length of the course, the shouting and clapping of hands he encounters on both sides keeping him in the middle of the road. What a rejoicing is there! The poor dog must needs run a race, and if he happens to be fat and plump, he looks comically miserable; for he can hardly put one leg before the other, and is nevertheless compelled to gallop.

It is pleasant during Carnival-time to go into a tavern in the evening, where you may often meet a whole company of merry masks: they drink their *fcglietta*, improvise a song, or dance the *Saltarello*. Large groups move through the streets with song and beating of tambourines, preceded

by a mask carrying a burning torch. In their fancy dresses they visit the theatres, especially the smaller ones; and there is as much acting among the audience as among the professional mimes. I followed a group of this kind into the Teatro Aliberti. About a third part of the audience wore masquerade dresses; knights in armour, flower girls, Harlequins, and Greek gods sat among us as ordinary mortals. One of the largest boxes in the grand tier was quite filled with pretty young Roman women, dressed as Pierrots, but without mask or *rouge;* they were so lively and charming, it was a pleasure to look at them; but they certainly took every one's attention completely from the stage. The piece performed that evening was a favourite tragedy, called "Byron in Venice, England, and Missolonghi." It was very moving, but the audience seemed exceedingly merry. In the gallery sat a man belonging to the lower classes. He had a thick black beard, and was attired as a peasant girl; he affected great emotion at the play, and spread first his veil and then his skirt over the box in front of him, and wiped his eyes and applauded. The eyes of the audience were fixed upon him more than upon Byron in Missolonghi.

The last day of the Carnival is always the liveliest; it closes with the gem of the whole festival, the glowing, splendid *Moccolo*. This year the scene was even more animated than usual. Here came a disguised young couple, marching up on gigantic stilts, and moving boldly about among carriages and pedestrians; yonder two men came growling along, disguised as bears, one white, the other coal-black, chained to each other, and followed by a miller fastened to a sweep. Here might be seen a man, hopping along with lottery tickets; his hat was crowned by a bladder of wind. Yonder came another, dragging an organ on a hand-cart: out of each of the pipes looked a live cat, who mewed piteously; for the man had a string fastened to the tail of each Grimalkin, and by pulling this string he played his organ. A carriage appeared decked out like a flowery throne, and on the throne was seated a minstrel: his harp was fastened securely in front of him, but over the harp stood a wheel of Fortune, adorned with a vast show of flags, and the wheel turned as the wind blew. Another carriage was made to represent a gigantic fiddle: on each string rode a comic figure, the first string being occupied by a pretty little girl, and all of them sung as loudly as they could, being incited thereto by the fiddler, who stood ready to draw his bow over the back of each person whose turn it was to give the tone. All along the road fell showers of *confetti* and of flowers, especially of the latter, for this spring had been very rich in violets and anemones. I saw Don Miguel of Spain, the veritable Don Miguel, striding through the crowd in private clothes; he was received with a deluge of *confetti*. Queen

Christina of Spain had posted herself on a balcony: flowers and *confetti* were her weapons.

And now the signal was given for the horse race. On this day one of the spectators was killed by a horse; but similar accidents happen every year, so the corpse was carried out of the way, and the sports proceeded. "*Moccoli! moccoli!*" was the cry; and in a moment from every window, from every balcony, and even from the roofs of the houses, were thrust forth long poles, sticks, and planks, garnished with little lighted candles. The occupants of the carriages, who, during the progress of the race, had been obliged to wait in the side streets, now once more thronged the Corso; but the horses, the coachman's hat and his whip, were garnished with burning wax candles; every lady in every carriage held her taper aloft, and sought to protect it from the opposite party, who made every effort to distinguish the light. Sticks, with pocket-handkerchiefs fastened to them, fluttered aloft. A shouting and shrieking, which no one can imagine who has not heard it, filled the air. "*Senza moccolo! senza moccolo!*" Little paper balloons with light inside them sailed down among the crowd, and it seemed as if all the stars of heaven, with the Milky Way among them, were making a progress through the Corso; the air seemed heated by the numberless candles, and every ear was deafened by the din. It was the wildest Bacchanal scene; when suddenly every light was extinguished, and as the last glimmer went out, and darkness and silence fell upon all, the church bells sounded, and the long fast had begun.

And next morning one well-packed carriage after another drove away, laden with strangers—away from quiet Rome, where all the galleries were closed, and every altar-piece was hung with black draperies.

And we went away to Naples.

MAHOMET'S BIRTHDAY.

A SCENE IN CONSTANTINOPLE.

The fourth of April is the birthday of the Prophet. Already on the eve of that day the celebration began; and to say the truth, the performance on the eve was the prettiest part of the festivity. I considered it unfortunate that the night happened to be moonlight, and that the

Osmanli police regulations demanded that every one who went out after sundown should carry a light in a lantern; but I was obliged to submit, for the police regulation could not be altered, nor could the moonlight. A young Russian named Aderhas and I associated ourselves together, and, without a companion, but duly provided with a light in a great paper lantern, we sallied forth to behold the illumination in honour of the Prophet.

We went through a narrow street of Pera, and before us lay a scene of fantastic beauty, such as we can only see in the North in a wondrous dream. From the row of houses near which we stood, down towards the bay, extended a churchyard, that is to say, a cypress grove, with

AT PERA.

thick dark trees; and dark night rested upon it. Over rough hills, downward among the tall trees, winds the path which the footsteps of men and the hoofs of horses have worn, sometimes among the tombs, sometimes among fallen grave-stones. Here and there a blue lantern was seen moving to and fro, which soon disappeared, to reappear shortly upon the black background of the picture.

In the churchyard a few lonely houses lie scattered, and the lights glimmered from the upper windows, or were carried to and fro upon the balconies.

Beyond the cypress-tops shone, blue as a Damascene blade, the Gulf with its many ships. Two of these, the largest, were richly ornamented with burning lamps, which glittered around the portholes, the masts,

and the guns also, or were hung in the rigging, which shone like a spangled net. Just before us lay the town itself, the great far-spreading Constantinople, with its countless minarets all wreathed with garlands of lamps. The air was still red with the sheen of the setting sun, but so clear and transparent that the mountains of Asia, and Olympus, covered with perpetual snow, showed their sharp broken outlines like a silver-white cloud behind the glorious city. The moonlight did not deaden the splendour of the lamps, but only brought out the minarets in relief, till they looked like gigantic flower-stalks crowned with blossoms of flame. The smaller minarets had one starry wreath, the larger two, and the largest of all three, one over the other.

Not a human being was to be seen in our neighbourhood, all was lonely and still. We wandered down among the cypresses; a nightingale was raising its flute-like voice, and turtle-doves cooed among the shadows of the trees. We came past a little sentry-house, built of planks, and painted red; a little fire had been kindled in front of it, among the gravestones, and soldiers were reclining around it. They were dressed in European garb; but their complexion and features proclaimed them of Ishmael's race, children of the desert. With long pipes in their mouths, they lay and listened to a story. This story was about Mahomet's birth. The nightingale translated it for us, or we should not have understood it. Here it is:

"*La illah il Allah!*" "There is no God but God!" In the city of Mecca the merchants assembled for the sake of traffic; thither came Egyptian, and Persian, and Indian, and Syrian dealers. Each one had his idol in the temple Kabba, and a son of Ishmael's race filled the highest office, namely, that of satisfying the hunger of the pilgrims and quenching their thirst. In his piety he wished, like Abraham, to offer up his son as a sacrifice; but the prophetess declared that the handsome Abdallah should live, and a hundred camels were sacrificed in his stead. "*La illah il Allah!*"

And Abdallah grew to be a man, and was so handsome that a hundred maidens died for love of him. The prophetic flame shone on his forehead, the flame which passed hidden from race to race, until the Prophet was born, Mahomet, the first and the last. The prophetess Fatima saw this flame, and she offered a hundred camels if he would be her husband; but he married Amina, and the prophetic flame vanished from his forehead and burned in Amina's heart. "*La illah il Allah!*"

And the next year came round; the flowers had never been so sweet as they were this year, never had the fruits on the trees swelled with such abundance of juice; and the rocks trembled, and the lake Sava

sank into the earth, the idols fell down in the temple, and the demons, who wanted to storm the heavens, fell from the sky like millions of shooting stars, hurled down by the mighty hand that wielded the lance; for in that night Mahomet the Prophet was born. "*La illah il Allah!*"

This was the story the nightingale translated for us, for the nightingale understands Turkish just as well as our own language.

We went forth beneath the tower of Pera, out to the convent of the dancing dervishes, and a beauteous panorama met our view. The whole Sea of Marmora lay before us, lighted up by the rays of the moon, and in the mid distance Scutari stood forth, its minarets gleaming with many lamps, like those of Constantinople. The Mosque of St. Sophia with its four, and the Mosque of Ahmed with its six minarets, stood forth in especial splendour, each pinnacle crowned with a double or a triple garland of glittering stars. They seemed to surround the garden of the Serail, which stretched down towards the Bosphorus, dark as a starless night. No light shone in the palace of the sultanas near the shore; but there where the Golden Horn ends, a sword of flame had been reared, that threw a ruddy glow over the waters. Innumerable little boats, gaily decked out with red, green, or blue paper lanterns, darted like fireflies between the shores of the two continents. All the great line-of-battle ships blazed with lamps; every ship, nay, every rope and spar, could be clearly seen, the outlines drawn in fiery colours. Scutari and Stamboul seemed united by the gleaming water with its rows of shining sparks. It was a fairy city, a city of the fancy, with a magic haze poured forth over it; and only two points were covered by mysterious darkness; in Asia, the great churchyard behind Scutari; in Europe, the garden of the Serail. Night and dreams lay brooding over both spots—the dead heroes are dreaming of the maidens of Paradise, and in the night of the Serail the dreams are those of earthly beauties, charming and fair as the houris of Paradise.

The streets of Pera were filled with a throng of Greeks, Jews, and Franks, each carrying his lantern or his candle. It was an Oriental procession of *Moccoli;* but the costumes were far more correct, more rich and varied, than those in the Corso of Rome on the last evening of the Carnival. In front of the palaces of the foreign ministers lamps were burning, erected in the form of pyramids, or in a great M, the initial letter of the Prophet's name. At nine o'clock cannon were fired from all the ships; there was a thundering din, like that of a sea fight; all the windows shook; shot after shot boomed forth, announcing the hour at which the Prophet was born.

I fell asleep amid the thunder of the cannon, and was awaked early by the same sound. Merry music of Rossini and Donizetti sounded through the streets: the troops were marching on, to be paraded between the Serail and the Mosque of Ahmed, whither the Sultan was about to proceed in state.

The Danish consul, Romain, an Italian, came to fetch me. A young Turk, with pistols in his girdle and two long tobacco pipes in his hand, walked before us; an old Armenian, in a dark blue fluttering caftan, and a black jar-shaped hat on his shaven head, came after us, carrying our cloaks; and thus we strode through the main street of Pera, down towards Galata. The servants stepped into a boat, we two embarked in another, and now we rowed across the Gulf, darting swiftly among hundreds of others, whose rowers shouted and howled at each other, as one or other of the boats ran the risk of being swamped. At the landing-place in Constantinople the mass of gondolas formed a huge swaying bridge, across which we had to skip, to reach the firm land, which is bordered by decayed planks and beams. The crowd was great, but soon we came to a broad side street. Here were many people, but there was room enough. Great crowds of veiled women wended along the same way with us, and soon we had arrived under the walls of the Serail, which are very high towards the town, and look like the walls of an old fortress. Here and there is a tower, with a little door, which looks as if it had never been opened; the hinges were covered with grass and climbing plants. Great old trees stretched their leafy branches across the old walls; one could fancy one's self on the borders of the forest in which sleeps the enchanted Princess.

We chose our position in front of the Mosque of St. Sophia, between the great fountain and the entrance to the Serail. From this point the Mosque of St. Sophia, with its numerous cupolas and subsidiary buildings, has a whimsical resemblance to a great flower bulb to which several smaller bulbs have attached themselves. The terraces in the foreground were thronged with Turkish women and children, and the shining white veils worn by the former gave the scene quite a festive air. The fountain behind us is the largest and most beautiful in Constantinople. With the name "fountain" we usually associate the idea of a basin with a jet of water plashing up from it; but in Turkey fountains have a very different appearance; and a more correct idea of their appearance will be obtained by imagining a square house, whose walls are quite Pompeian in their variegated richness of colour: the white groundwork is painted with inscriptions from the Koran in red, blue, and gilt letters; and from little niches, to which brazen basins are fastened, the conse-

crated water ripples forth, with which the Mussulman bathes his hands and face at certain hours of the day. The roof is painted and gilt with quite a Chinese richness of colour. The dove, the sacred bird of the Turks, builds its nest here: in hundreds they flew over our heads, to and fro between the fountain and the Mosque of St. Sophia.

All around were a number of Turkish coffee-houses, all built of wood, with balconies, almost like the Swiss houses in appearance, but more gaudy and less solid: before each there stretched a little plantation of trees; and all these plantations were occupied by smoking and coffee-drinking Turks, who quite lit up the gardens and the fronts of the houses with their bright-coloured caftans: some of them wore turbans, others fez caps. Between the fountain and the great gate leading into the forecourt of the Serail, two long scaffolds had been erected of boards placed on tubs and tables. The second of these was higher than the first, and on the lower one veiled Turkish women of the lowest class were reclining. Old Turks, Persians, and a few Frankish strangers, whose unveiled women were objects of universal attention, held their station on the upper platform. Now appeared several regiments of Turkish soldiers, all dressed in European fashion, in tight trousers and close jackets, white cross-belts across their chests, and red fez caps on their heads. The guards made a very good appearance in their new uniforms, with tight stock and collars; and, as I was told, they wore gloves to-day for the first time. Some of the other regiments seemed in most lamentable plight: not only were the men of all possible complexions, white, brown, and coal-black soldiers all mingled together, but some of them were lame, and others had club feet. Their European uniforms were too tight for them, consequently the majority had ripped up the seam of the sleeves at the elbow, and many had cut their trousers at the knee, that they might move their legs with greater freedom; consequently naked elbows were seen protruding all along the line, and during the march many a red, brown, or black knee protruded from the blue trouser. Especially remarkable was one regiment, which I might almost call the "barefoot warriors," for some of them had only one boot and one shoe, while others shuffled along with bare feet thrust into slippers of different colours. Amid a din of military music, they all marched into the court-yard of the Serail, and, after defiling before the Sultan, came back and drew up in line along both sides of the way: Ethiopians and Bulgarians stood side by side, and the Bedouin became the neighbour of the shepherd's son from the Balkan.

At ten o'clock the procession was to begin; but it was nearly twelve before the Sultan thought fit to leave the Serail. The sun shone warm

as in summer; cup after cup of coffee was quaffed, and once or twice the lower platform gave way, and all the Turkish women tumbled down in a heap. It was a long time to wait. Until within a few years, it was the custom to bring out to this spot the heads of those who had been decapitated in the courtyard of the Serail, and to throw them to the dogs; but everything looked peaceable enough now. Young Turks who could speak a little French or Italian began a conversation with us, and with other Franks, and showed the greatest willingness to explain to us whatever they thought might excite our interest. Below us, in front of the walls of the Serail, lay spread the Sea of Marmora, enlivened with many a sail, and glittering in the sunshine; and high up, in the background, the snow-covered mountain-peaks of Asia glowed in the clear blue-green sky. I had never before seen this grassy glimmer in the air. A young Turk, who told me he had been born on the banks of the Euphrates, assured me that yonder the sky sometimes showed rather green than blue.

But now a cannon-shot resounded from the garden of the Serail: the procession was starting. First came a mounted military band,—even the drummer and the man who played the cymbals were on horseback: the latter musician let the reins hang loose on the horse's neck, while he clashed the brazen plates in the sunlight. Now came the Sultan's guards, as soldierly a body of men as you would see in any Christian kingdom; then a number of splendid horses were led along, without riders, but all decked in gorgeous trappings, red, blue, and green, and all powdered with jewels. The horses danced along on their strong slender legs, tossing their heads, and shaking their manes, while their red nostrils quivered like the leaf of the mimosa, and more than instinct seemed to flash from their bright eyes. Now came a mounted troop of young officers, all clad in the European costume, but wearing the fez cap; they were followed by civil and military officials, all clad in the same way; and now the Grand Vizier of the empire appeared, an old man, with a long beard of snowy whiteness. Bands of music had been posted at different points, and relieved each other at intervals. In general, pieces from Rossini's "William Tell" were played, but suddenly they were broken off, and the strains of the young Sultan's favourite march were heard. This march had been composed by the brother of Donizetti, who has been appointed band-master here. Now came the Sultan, preceded by a troop of Arabian horses still more gorgeously caparisoned than those who had gone before. Rubies and emeralds formed rosettes for the horses' ears; the morocco leather bridles were covered with precious stones, and saddles and saddle-cloths were wrought with pearls and jewels.

It seemed as though we were looking on the work of a spirit of Aladdin's lamp. Surrounded by a number of young men on foot, all displaying a feminine Oriental beauty, as if a number of Turkish women had ventured abroad without their veils, came riding on his splendid Arab horse the young "nineteen-year-old" Sultan Abdul Medjid. He wore a green coat buttoned across the chest, and wore no ornament, except one great jewel with which the bird of Paradise feather was fastened in his red fez cap. He looked very pale and thin, had melancholy features, and fixed his dark eyes firmly on the spectators, especially on the Franks. We took off our hats and bowed; the soldiers shouted out, "Long live the Emperor!" but he made not a gesture in acknowledgment of our salutes.

"Why does he not notice our salutes?" I inquired of a young Turk at my side. "He must have seen that we took off our hats."

"He looked at you," replied the Turk; "he looked at you very closely."

With this we had to be content, for it was considered as good as the best acknowledgment. I told the Turk that all Frankish princes acknowledged the salutes of their subjects with uncovered heads, a statement which seemed quite incredible to him.

Pashas and other grandees of the empire now came by; then Frankish officers in the Turkish employ, and then a number of servants, male and female Turks, closed the procession. Such a crowd, such a pushing to and fro! Half-naked street boys with dingy turbans, old beggar women with ragged veils, but with coloured trousers and morocco slippers, pushed noisily through the throng.

"*Allah akbar!*" "God is great!" they shouted, when the soldiers tried to drive them back with the butt ends of their muskets. The whole street was like a many-coloured stream of fez caps, turbans, and veils, and on both sides, like reeds along the river's banks, rose the glittering bayonets. Whenever parties of Franks wished to pass through the ranks of the military, Turkish officers came forward and made room for them with the greatest politeness, pushing aside their fellow-countrymen, who contented themselves with gazing upon the favoured Franks, and shouting once more, "*Allah akbar!*"

DAYS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Peacefully the wide sea lay spread abroad. No movement could be felt on board our ship. We could go to and fro as we pleased, as if on dry land; only when we looked at the wake in the water could we see

that the ship was making way, as it glided farther and farther from the yellow shores of Malta.

We had seven young Spanish monks on board; they could speak a little Italian, and were all of them missionaries bound for India. The youngest of them was very handsome, with a pale melancholy face. He told me that his parents were still alive, but that since his sixteenth year he had not seen his mother, who was very dear to him. "And now I shall not see her till we meet in heaven!" he sighed. He left Europe with a bleeding heart; but he saw that he must go, for it was his duty,—he stood enrolled in God's service. Like his brethren, he belonged to the order founded by St. Theresa

THE BOSPHORUS.

To most of those on board, I was the traveller who had journeyed farthest, for I came from the North.

"From Denmark!" cried our Romish clergyman, who was going to Jerusalem. "Denmark! Then you are an American?"

I explained to him that Denmark was far distant from America, but he shook his head incredulously.

We had a Papal envoy on board, bound for the Lebanon. He was the only Italian who knew anything about Denmark. He knew a Danish Princess who resided in Rome, and had been at her *soirées;* he knew that there was a man living named Thorwaldsen, and that there had been one of the name of Tycho Brahè. I have made the observation that Tycho

is the man of our country who is best known in foreign parts. Tycho is the most celebrated Dane, and we drove him away! Denmark is great as a mother, but she has often been a bad mother to the best of her children.

In the middle of the day we could still see Malta; but of Sicily we could only discern the snow-clad summit of Etna, but that glittered clear and large, like a pyramid of white sun-illumined marble. There was not the slightest stir in the sea, we seemed to be gliding through the air. An enormous dolphin, larger than a horse, tumbled two or three times beside the ship; the sun shone on his wet smooth back. Melodies from Auber's "White Lady" sounded up to us from the piano in the cabin; and the merry sailor boys sang as they climbed the rigging, "*Quel plaisir d' être matelot.*"

The boatswain's pipe sounded, and the crew were put through their exercise. Then came the welcome sound that summoned to dinner. As we sat drinking our coffee, the sun sank down, red and large; the sea shone like fire.

And now the sun had set, and the stars gleamed forth in such splendour as I can never express in words. What a blaze of light! Venus shone like the moon herself: her rays threw a long strip of light on the surface of the water, which heaved gently, as if the sea were breathing. Low on the horizon, over the African coast, stood a star that shone like fire: under this star the Bedouin rode on his swift horse, under this star the caravans moved through the glowing sand. It must be pleasant to sit in such a night beneath the African tent. The star seemed to send flames through the blood. I sat by the ship's margin and looked out over the watery expanse. Phosphoric flashes darted through the sea: it seemed as if men were walking about with torches at the bottom of the sea, and as if these were suddenly blazing up. They gleamed and disappeared as though these flames were the visible breath of the sea.

Already at nine o'clock I was in my berth, and went to sleep at once, while the ship steered busily on through the sea. When I came upon deck next morning early, they were cleaning it; all hands were busily in motion, and soon the boards gleamed so clean and bright, it was a pleasure to see them. On the forecastle, where the anchors and ropes lay, the sailors were having their grand wash. The orthodox method of washing trousers seemed to be to lay those garments flat on the deck, pour sea-water over them, and then sweep them over and over with a worn broom, among whose bristles some pieces of soap had been inserted.

Two sharp ship boys, small, but nimble as squirrels, and full of mischief, were killing chickens, and before every execution they held a

humorous speech to the fowl that was to be the victim, always ending with the word "*voilà*" as the knife passed over the victim's neck.

We noticed a slight movement in the sea, but as the sun mounted higher it became perfectly still, as it had been the whole day before. No river passage can be compared to this for stillness: here and there in the far distance, dark blue patches on the sunlit expanse of the sea indicated that there a breath of wind was rippling the even surface. Malta was no longer to be seen; but Mount Etna stood clear and plain on the horizon. To the north-east we descried the white sails of a ship, and this was the first vessel we had seen since we left Malta.

On the fore-deck the sailors were at breakfast. Each one received a ration of wine, onions, and bread: all of them were very merry, and they had among them one who was their jester, and another who served as his butt.

A Persian, in a green turban and a white shawl caftan, sat solitarily toying with his earrings or with his sword. No one spoke to him, and he spoke to no one; but a smile played around his lips, as if pleasant thoughts were passing through his soul; or, was he thinking of the return home, and of all he should have to tell of his journeyings over land and sea? As I passed him, he suddenly seized me by the arm, and spoke a few words in Persian which I could not understand; but he laughed and nodded, and pointed to one side of the deck. He rewarded me for my greeting by calling my attention to an incident which occurred on our passage. A little bird had alighted in the rigging, utterly exhausted, and now sank down to the deck. A number of spectators gathered around it, and I felt quite angry with the Roman clergyman, when he proposed that it should be roasted immediately, for no doubt it would taste delicious. But I cried, "Our little winged voyager shall not be eaten."

One of the lieutenants took it under his protection, placed it on a sail that had been stretched out as an awning over the after-deck, and provided it with a plate of bread crumbs and water; so the bird was our guest for the whole of the day, and for that night, too; it was not till the morrow that he took his departure, when he flew away, twittering, as if to thank us for the hospitality he had experienced at our hands.

This was a great event for us all; but soon we were fain to seek occupation or amusement. One went to a piano, another opened a book, some played cards, others walked to and fro together. The Bedouin sat upon the coal-sacks, silent as a spirit, his eyes flashing out of his brown face, his sinewy brown legs protruding from his white burnouse. The Persian continued to play with his sword, to handle his pistols, or to turn

the silver rings in his ears. The captain was copying a picture from my album—a peasant, a reminiscence of Christian, in my tale of "Only a Fiddler." The sketch now adorns the captain's cabin, so that the fiddler travels every year between Marseilles and Constantinople on the proud ship "Leonidas." I employed myself in giving one of the ship's officers a lesson in German. He translated Schiller's "Partition of the Earth."

The time passed away charmingly, and merriment and good humour reigned at our dinner-table. The sunset was exquisitely lovely. The stars glittered down on us in full brightness. The motion of the vessel was quite imperceptible; only on looking up at the stars through the rigging it seemed as if the sky were turning slowly around the motionless ship.

We could still discern Etna, looming like a white pyramid, in the north-west; but all around nothing was to be seen but the endless expanse of ocean; towards noon, however, I discerned a white spot in the north-east. It could not be a ship, for it extended too far; but very possibly it might be a cloud. I thought it was the Greek coast, and questioned the captain; but he shook his head, and said we should not behold the Grecian coast till the next day, though he confessed land was to be sought for in the direction where I fancied I had seen it. Neither he nor any of the passengers could make anything out.

When, after dinner, shortly before sunset, I once more sought the point I had seen, it loomed as visible as Etna itself. No, it could not be a cloud, for it had not altered its shape, and stood in the same place it had occupied three hours ago.

The captain took his best telescope, and presently shouted, "Land!" It was really the Greek coast, a mountain summit of Navarino, gleaming snow-clad in the pure air. So I had been the first to discern the Grecian land.

"I have never heard," said the captain, "that any one could, with the naked eye, from the Mediterranean, at one and the same time discern Etna and the Greek coast. That's quite remarkable!"

When I talked about this afterwards, in Athens, a learned man said that he had lately read an account of such a thing in a book, but that the critics had doubted if it could occur. But it is a fact, as I can vouch from personal observation. It is the snow on Etna and the snow on the Greek mountains that render it possible, in the clear sunshine, to behold at once the eastern and the western land.

Greece! So now I beheld before me the great native land of intellect. Beneath yonder mountain lay stretched the beauteous valleys of Arcadia. A thousand thoughts, each differing from the rest, flew like a flight of

wandering birds to the glistening mountain. But the sun sank down, and the thoughts rose from recollections of the earth, and soared upward towards the beauty of heaven.

Next morning I was up before the sun; it was the 20th of March. Blood-red as I had never yet seen it, and wonderfully oval in form, rose the beauteous orb, and the day streamed out over the calm sea; and before us on the right lay, clear and distinct, but far, very far off, the coast of the Morea. It was the old Lacedæmon upon which we gazed. A steep precipice rose perpendicularly from the ocean, and in the interior of the country towered picturesque snow-clad hills. How my heart leapt up at sight of them!

I can see the shining air, and the gleaming strand; and yonder strip of rocky coast is Greece!

THE GRAVEYARD AT SCUTARI.

The Turks consider themselves strangers in Europe, consequently they wish to rest in their native land, which is Asia. Thus in Asia, by Scutari, is the greatest graveyard of Constantinople. Where one corpse has been buried, the Turks never deposit another, for the grave is the dead man's home, which must be held sacred; and thus their churchyards grow very rapidly, and that at Scutari extends for miles. For every new-born child a plantain, for every deceased person a cypress is placed here; therefore the graveyard at Scutari is an extensive forest, intersected by footpaths and roads. Here are the richest monuments and the greatest variety in memorials of the dead. In the midst of the large flat stone which covers most of the graves, a hole has been dug, in which the rain-water may collect. The vagrant, masterless dogs quench their thirst here; and when the Turk sees this, he considers it a sign that the soul of the departed is happy in Mahomet's Paradise.

Side by side, like swathes of corn upon a mown field, lie beneath the cypresses the grave-stones of the dead, with a turban or a fez cap sculptured on each. It is easy to see where the dervish or the Turk of the old orthodox faith lies buried, and where one of the new half-European race has been carried to his rest. On the stone is inscribed, in letters of gold, the name and rank of the deceased; a sensible epitaph speaks of the shortness of life, or exhorts the living to pray for the dead. Where

the women rest the spot is marked only by a sculptured lotos flower: no word tells of them, for even in death the woman here is veiled, and the stranger knows her not.

No fence girds round this forest of the dead men's graves; lonely and solitary is it here under the dark cypresses. The broad high road passes among the overturned stones; the Arab drives his camels past the graves, and the tinkle of their bells is the only sound that breaks the stillness of the great solitude.

Silent as the dead beneath the cypress shade lies the Sea of Marmora before us, and shows us its beauteous-tinted islands: the largest of them all yonder appears like a little Paradise, with its wild rocks, vineyards, woods of cypresses, pines, and plane trees. What a beautiful sight seen from the garden of the dead! This beauteous spot was the place of banishment of fallen emperors, princes, and princesses of the Byzantine empire: in convents upon these islands they had to sigh, in the garb of poor monks and nuns. It is better here, among the dead, where the perishable slumbers in dreamless peace, and the immortal rises to God!

What silence among these graves under the cypresses! We will wander forth hither on a moonlight night. What dark trees! Night broods over the graves; what a gleaming sky!—from that sky life streams forth!

Over the uneven road a white and a red point are moving like glowing roses: they are only two paper lanterns; an old Turk holds them in his hands as he rides through the garden of the dead. He does not think of the dead; no, the living are in his thoughts,—the pretty merry women in his pleasant home, where he will soon stretch his limbs upon the soft cushions of the divan, eating the *pilau*, and smoking his pipe, while the youngest of his wives sits by him, and the others perform a Chinese shadow comedy before him—a merry comedy, such as the Turks love in their houses, with a *Karagof*, or Harlequin, and a *Hadji Aiwat*, or Pantaloon. Under the dark cypresses, among the graves, the old man is thinking of life, and life with him means enjoyment.

Again all is silence. And now footsteps are heard; no lantern gleams this time, no horse trots by, but a youth, fiery and strong, handsome as the young Ishmael on his marriage day, comes yonder. He comes full of thoughts of life: he is ready to build him a nest in every house, in every tree; the picture of glowing life, he wanders among the graves. And the thoughts that are passing through his soul proclaim him a Turk.

Silent it is in the garden of the dead—silent in the hut by the Sea of Marmora.

THE BOSPHORUS.

The Bosphorus is a river, transparent as the sea, a river of salt water that unites two seas; a river between two quarters of the globe, along whose banks every spot is picturesque, every point of historical interest. Here the East is joined to Europe, and fancies itself the ruler of the latter. I know no place where strength and mildness meet so completely as here. The shores of the Rhine in the full beauty of autumn have not the colours which glow on the Bosphorus coast. The Rhine would seem narrow compared with the bed of this grass-green river; and yet I was reminded of the Rhine and also of the shores of the Mâlar Lake between Stockholm and Upsall, when the warm sunshine glittered among the green fir trees, and the trembling branches of the ash.

The mirror of waters is not so broad anywhere as to prevent the traveller from seeing distinctly the objects on either bank. In seven windings the stream rolls on, between the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea, and throughout nearly its whole length the European bank looks like a single town, a single street, behind which the mountains rise, if not majestically, at least high enough to deserve the name of mountains—and on their sides there is verdure like that of a garden, a true botanical garden. Here are birch trees, like in Sweden and Norway; groups of beeches that remind one of Denmark, pines, plane trees, and chestnuts, such as we find in Italy; and cypresses, large and majestic, as only the graveyard at Scutari and Pera can show; and amid the rich green rises the palm tree with its broad leafy crown, like a memorial pillar, to remind us in what part of the world we are.

The whole coast appears, as I have said, like a town, and yet is not a town. Here streets and gardens alternate with each other, with graveyards and vineyards. At one point stands a mosque with its white shining minarets, at another a palace, such as we may imagine an Eastern palace to be, and farther on, little wooden houses painted red, and seeming to have been transplanted from the pine forests of Norway.

Turning his eyes to the Asiatic shore, the traveller finds everything just as rich, as varied; only he has not this mass of buildings which makes the European side look like one continued town; here the plains are greater, the mountains higher and more thickly wooded.

The fifth of May, the day of Napoleon's death, I was destined to

spend upon the Black Sea. There are for us holidays of the mind besides those which the calendar indicates as Sundays and Feasts. Our own life, and the events in history, point out to us certain days of which the calendar says nothing. Often, in thinking of the mighty events that once happened on such a day, I have felt deeply how prosaically it had passed for me.

But in this year one of the famous anniversaries of the present became an epoch in my life, when on its morning, at half-past four, I sailed out of the harbour of Constantinople, through the Bosphorus, and into the Black Sea.

I awoke as the anchor was being weighed; I dressed hastily, and ran on deck. Everything lay shrouded in mist, but only for a moment, for the veil rose with wonderful swiftness to the top of the tower of Pera; this lay behind us, with Galata and Topschana. The great barrack buildings, the lofty mosque in the suburb Funderklu, stood boldly forth, with the whole Greek fleet, which had lately returned from Egypt. We glided past close to it: Turkish soldiers and sailors were peering forth from every porthole. Each one of these could in a few minutes have told us things truer and more poetical than are to be found in the celebrated works of Pückler-Muskau. But our steamer was gliding on, and the mist too was gliding on; now it touched the funnel of our vessel, and now it rose in wreaths, to be presently changed into rain-bringing clouds. There was such a movement and life in the sky, that one might have fancied Darius and his army were passing in shadowy mist over the Bosphorus. Life and motion were there also around us, in hundreds of boats; those that came from the ships of war were strong and well manned, but those which came rowing out from the coast were frail little barks, in the bottom of which the Turk sat cross-legged. But on our vessel there was silence. Over the deck the Turks had spread some coloured carpets; some of the passengers were asleep, wrapped in their warm furs, others were drinking their black coffee, or puffing the smoke from their long pipes. The mist rose and fell as when the world was formed out of chaos. At times the sun burst forth, at others it seemed to have lost all its power. The ships lying in the distance looked like shadow-pictures, and reminded me of the story of the Death-ship and the Flying Dutchman.

Topschana and Pera seemed to form one continuous town with Constantinople, of which Scutari was the suburb—Scutari with its white minarets, reddish-brown houses, and green gardens, lying in the brightest sunshine, which spread over the Asiatic coast. We could see the lovely village of Kandelli, the imperial garden, and the far-spreading

palaces of the Sultan. Nature appears in full splendour of wealth on the banks of the Bosphorus.

How often, when I was a boy, did not my thoughts sail away with the "Thousand and One Nights," and I saw wonderful palaces of marble, with hanging gardens and cool fountains! Here I saw one of these palaces in reality: it was the summer palace, built a short time since on the European side, and in which Sultan Abdul Medjid established himself last year as the first occupant. It is built in the Eastern style, on a grand scale, with marble pillars and high terraces.

Such a scene is well chosen for the love-dream of a young monarch not yet twenty years of age: here, to speak in the style of the Turkish poets, spring comes early, and dresses the tulip in its crimson garb, which the dew fringes with pearls; and for the young Prince cypresses and plane trees lift up their hands in supplication, that they may throw their shade over him during a long life. But what is a *long* life? A happy life. And what is it to be happy? Men's ideas vary on the subject: some are for a deathless name, others for the happiness of affection. Ask the youth. Alas! not every one is an Alexander, who can win both, and doubly win them, and die in the midst of victory.

The palace garden extends downward to the village of Kurutscheme, whose peculiar wooden buildings along the water-side attract the attention of the traveller. The upper storeys project over the lower, supported by beams driven in a slanting direction into the lower woodwork, so that the path between the buildings and the water is thus in a manner roofed in by the projecting storeys. Here dwell several of the older sultanas, consequently the windows are veiled by close wooden shutters, which are, however, not unprovided with peep-holes, through which the once beautiful and powerful occupants look out upon the water and upon the foreign ships.

The beauteous Valley of Bebeh, with its pleasure palace, now opened out before us. It is bounded by the dark cypresses of a churchyard; but a few words can give no picture of it,—the eye must behold this valley, which, like a park, shows in the bright moonlight a variety of green, such as no palette can reproduce; these willows must be seen, whose trembling boughs cast a shadow that seems to play upon the earth; these groups of forest trees, under whose leafy covert the turtle-dove builds her nest; these fat green meadows, where the shining white ox stands like a picture of the old time, half buried in the long grass. Here we have life, sunshine, and enjoyment; and close beside extends the boundary of all things,—the dark cypress-grove with its graves, offering shade and rest.

And now we have glided past the churchyard, and rocks rise up in picturesque forms: we are at the place where Androcles of Samos built the bridge over the Bosphorus—the bridge over which Darius led the Persians against the Scythians. One of the rocks was at that time hewn out into a throne for Darius, whence he could behold all the country round; but of this no trace remains. Osmanli saints rest at the foot of the rock: the soil is sacred now that the wild hordes once trod, and tall dark cypresses seem to keep watch over the graves.

The wandering birds of the Bosphorus,—banished souls the sailors call them,—soared towards us here, anon wheeling round and sailing slowly away. Here are built, one on the Asiatic, the other on the European side, the strong castles Anatoli Hissari and Rumili Hissari, which were to command the passage; but the embrasures are bricked up; the buildings have long been turned into prisons, and the name of the Black Towers is given to these castles, in which thousands of Christians have languished. The castle on the European side has been strangely built. The Sultan Mahmoud desired that its outline should indicate his name as the word is written in the Arabic character: a hundred Christian churches were plundered for the materials of which these inhabited characters were built; but no joy has dwelt in the castle; sighs and groans have quivered through Mahmoud's haughty pile. Stone was firmly fixed upon stone, but the strong finger of Time will wipe out the inscription, and the earth will spread the poetry of spring on the black rock whereon it was written—the poetry that dwells in the fragrant ferns, grasses, and flowers.

The Asiatic side is the most beautiful. Behind the gloomy fortress the Valley of the Heavenly Waters stretches into the land, the valley famed as the most charming of all the dales of the Bosphorus, whose fragrant loveliness has given rise to its name; but we glided by all too swiftly, and could only see as much of its beauty as we can see of the soul within when for a moment we glance at a pair of lovely eyes.

Kandiliche's great mosque now rose before us, looking as if Ahmed's church had been borne hither by angels, that we might once more rejoice our hearts with its view. A little village lay almost hidden among gigantic fig trees, from which it has received its name, the Fig Town.

Amid plane trees, lindens, and sycamores, rose, in the form of an amphitheatre, Sultanje, its reversed outline mirrored in the clear water of the coast. The slender white minaret, pointing upwards towards heaven, while its mirrored reflection pointed downwards to the depths, seemed to say, "Look not only on life as it appears in the sunshine around you; look upon it also as it is shown in the driving clouds and

the soaring birds; look at it as it appears in the teeming waters between the two continents!" And, in truth, here was enough of life and motion! Large boats, freighted with Turkish women, wrapped in light airy veils, were passing to and fro between the opposite shores. Just by our steamer, one of the youngest women rose up in one of these boats. She glanced upwards at us, and the Persian song that tells of the growth of the cedar, and of the colours of the tulip, struck upon my ear. Who does not remember seeing, on a dark night, the whole country lit up by a single flash of lightning, after which all is shrouded

THE TURKISH LADIES IN THE BOAT.

in darkness once more? But one never forgets the picture revealed by that flash; and here we had two lightnings, a flash from each of her eyes, and then night sank down upon her again. We saw no more the daughter of the East, of whom, centuries ago, the poet has sung: "When she dries her locks with a handkerchief, it is fragrant with perfume; when she wipes the tear from her eye, a pearl falls from it; if she touches her cheek, the handkerchief is filled with fragrant roses; and if it passes by her lips, a fruit of Paradise is found within it." I looked after the boat, we were already far from it: the women in the white veils looked like spirits in Charon's boat; and there was truth in the thought, for that which we shall never behold again is numbered among the dead for us. She had flung an orange into the water, and it floated to and fro, a memento of the encounter. Slender fishing-boats,

shot by the great ships that came from the Black Sea; the double eagle of Russia flapped his wings on the proud flag. Rocking slowly to and fro on the water in front of a fishing village—I think its name was Baikos—were boat-huts, from which depended long nets, wherein sword-fish were to be caught. I called them huts, but they might be called baskets. In each of them sat a half-naked fisherman, toiling at his trade.

On the European side we passed close by Therapia, in whose deep gulf great ships lay anchored. A little boat met us here; an old negro was rowing it. He wore a woollen coat, like the Greeks, and great silver rings in his ears; on his head he had no other covering than his own frizzled locks. The boat was literally filled with roses; a little Greek girl, with black hair braided around her scarlet fez cap, and ornamented with a single large coin, stood leaning against a great basket filled with roses; in her hand she held a little Bulgarian drum. The boat rocked up and down in the increased swell caused by the swift passage of our steamer through the water; the little maiden clung for support to the rose-basket, but it turned over with her, and poured its flood of blossoms over her face and form. She jumped up again, and when she saw that we were watching her, she laughingly beat the little drum once or twice, then threw it into the basket, and held up a handfull of roses before her face. It was a picture worth painting,—the boat, the old negro, and the little Greek maiden, with Therapia, its gardens and ships, for a background.

But when a man wanders, for the first time, through a great rich gallery with thousands of paintings, one picture obliterates another from his mind; and the Bosphorus presents a series of pictures, such as only the greatest master could portray. I, who tell these things, have only once in my life beheld the gallery, in a rapid passage in a steamer, among its inexhaustible treasures.

A larger, wider bay than any we had yet seen formed the foreground to the next picture. Bujukdere, the summer residence of the ambassadors, lay before us. I looked among the flags of many nations fluttering there for the ensign of my native land; and, behold, there it was! I beheld the white cross in the red ground. Denmark had set up its white Christian cross in the land of the Turks. The flag fluttered in the breeze; it seemed to bring me a greeting from my home. My neighbour on board the steamer pointed out to me the great aqueduct with its double row of arches, which rose in the midst of the verdure of the green valley. Another began talking of Medea, who had wandered here, where now the seamen drew up their boats under the

shadows of the great plane trees; but my eyes and my thoughts were all for the Danish flag, which I had not seen until now during my entire journey; and remembrances which make the heart soft and tender arose within me.

What new sight of gentle beauty would the shores of the Bosphorus unfold to us now? As though it had nothing more of this kind to offer, the aspect of ature suddenly changed to a stern and wild character.

THE LITTLE GREEK MAIDEN.

Craggy yellow rocks rose out of the water; and batteries that had been raised to defend the Bosphorus from the raids of plundering Cossacks, were in keeping with the sterner features of this new view. The tower higher up the stream is called the Ovid's Tower, because it is asserted, though falsely, that the poet was once a prisoner here on the shores of the Black Sea. The tower is now in ruins, and is used after sunset as a lighthouse; great torches are kindled, whose red flames burn as a guiding beacon to the ships in the Black Sea.

On the Asiatic side the appearance of bright verdure continues for a little space; but, soon, when the banks approach nearer to each other,

the same stern, rocky character steps forth on both sides. No road now winds along by the water's edge; but goats are seen climbing on the strangely cut face of the rocks. In Asia the Bithynian range of mountains terminates here, in Europe the Thracian. The Black Sea lies before us, and at the extremities of the two coasts stand lighthouses, with flames of welcome for the ships that arrive, with farewell stars for those that depart.

Near the shore rise marvellous rocky islands, which seem to have been flung upon each other, each block of stone seeming riveted to the rest. The legend tells that these rocks once swam to and fro, but became fixed after the Argonauts had achieved the passage between them.

The sun shone on the naked stones, the sea lay spread in all its grandeur before us, and we sailed forth upon its bosom. The mists that had been rising and falling alternately the whole time of our passage through the Bosphorus, without ever entirely veiling its shores, now fell like a curtain, that is, rolled down over a glorious scene; another moment, and the shores of Europe and Asia were alike hidden from our gaze; the sea-birds were fluttering round the funnel of our bark, and then hastening away from us, leaving us alone amid the mist in the great sea!

ATHENS.

It was on the third morning after our arrival at the Piræus that the hour of our deliverance from quarantine sounded. A dozen Greek boats lay waiting around our ship. I sprang into the first that offered, and was borne with rapid strokes to the shore, where a number of vehicles for hire, old coaches and open chaises, stood drawn up; they seemed to have done good service, perhaps in Italy, and to have emigrated in the evening of life, to begin a new career of work in Greece. Only a few years ago, a marsh extended between the Piræus and Athens—a marsh round which the teams of camels laden with merchandise had to make a long circuit; but now a capital road has been built, and a *khan* also, where refreshments can be had. For a trifle the traveller is conveyed along this road, a distance of about five English miles. Our

baggage was packed in an old coach, which was completely filled; boxes and carpet-bags peering out through the windows on both sides. The company came in three great carriages; at the back of the one in which I rode, clung a Greek, gorgeously attired, a servant of the Hôtel de Munich, in Athens; he was dressed so well and so richly, that he might have passed very well for a Hellenic prince, in a northern masquerade.

So we rolled away, rejoicing, from the Piræus. Sailors in glazed hats were sitting in front of the coffee-houses, which looked like booths of boards, and they gave us a cheer as they emptied their wine-glasses. Our way led past the ruins of ancient walls, built of a kind of yellow

SAILORS CHEERING THE CARRIAGE.

stone, which still forms the material of the walls in these parts. So we went galloping on amid clouds of dust; but it was classic dust.

Soon we reached the olive grove—the classic grove of Minerva. A wooden booth had been erected on each side of the road: lemons and oranges were here displayed, supported by a row of bottles containing wines and liqueurs. While our horses were being watered, there came a number of beggars holding out tin dishes; we all gave them something, for were they not Greeks?

Just as in the best days of Athens, we still drive into the city through the forest of olives. Before us lay the Acropolis, as I had often seen it on pictures—now I saw it in reality. The steep Sykabettos, with its gleaming white hermitage, stood prominently forth; and now I beheld Athens. A few steps from the town, close by the right side of the way,

stands the temple of Theseus, with its noble marble pillars, tinted brownish-yellow by time.

I could hardly realize the idea that I was really in Greece—that I was rolling into the city of Minerva. The Hermes Street, the largest in Athens, is the first traversed by the traveller who comes from the Piræus; but the street commences with a row of houses, which have a miserable appearance enough, measured by the European standard. Gradually, better houses appeared. The Acropolis towered like a gigantic throne above all the low dwellings, and in the middle of the street along which we were driving grew the tallest palm tree I had ever seen. The stem is encircled by a pailing of red planks, to prevent it from being injured by the vehicles of the Greeks, who gallop past with their old coaches as if they were racing. This palm attracted the attention of every one of our party. I afterwards learned that when the street was first planned, the noble tree was to have been hewn down, because it stood in the way of carriages; but Professor Ross, a Holsteiner by birth, petitioned for its life, and accordingly it was spared. Accordingly I herewith solemnly name it "Ross's Palm," and all the compilers of guide books are requested to make a note of this. The Greeks should remember that their country forms a bridge between Europe and the East; therefore they must hold in honour the Oriental decorations which indicate this, among which the palm tree is chief. Most of the others in Athens have been destroyed, only two or three survive.

We stopped in front of the Hôtel de Munich. The landlord is a Greek, his wife a German, she is called the "fair Viennese." They gave me the best room, which is about as good as that in a German inn of the third class; so now I had a domicile in Athens.

I will now endeavour to portray the impression produced by the city, and to tell how I spent my first day in Athens.

The terrible accounts I had received in Naples concerning Greece, and especially Athens, proved to be ridiculously exaggerated. I dare say that a few years ago there was a terrible misery here; but it must be remembered how much even a single year will do for such a country as Greece, which is going through a period of more rapid development than any other European land has experienced.

It is as if the mental progress of a child were to be compared with the less apparent progress of a grown-up person: seven months with the former are as much as seven years with the latter. Athens seemed about as large as a provincial town of middling size, and looked as if it had been hastily erected for a fair. What they call "bazaars" here are really angular streets of wooden booths, such as one sees erected at a fair.

They are decorated with scarves, coloured stockings, ready-made clothes, and morocco slippers, all somewhat clumsy, but very gay in appearance. Here are butchers' booths, yonder fruit-shops, here fez caps are displayed; yonder they sell books, new and old; even our driver bought one for himself, and what was it? Nothing less than Homer's Iliad, printed in Athens in 1839. I read the title myself.

Athens has a few Greek or rather Turkish coffee-houses, and also a new Italian one, so large and elegant that it would make a good appearance even in Hamburg or Berlin. The much-frequented Café Greco in Rome is quite a hole-and-corner place compared with this. Young Greek men appeared here, all in national costume, exceedingly pinched in at the waist, and sporting eye-glasses and kid gloves,—appeared here smoking cigars and playing billiards; there was the true look of the lounger upon them all. At every street corner a row of Maltese porters are standing in the sun.

The most populous part of Athens stretches upward towards the Acropolis, round which ruin buildings are being erected. Athens is a town which seems to grow even in the few days that the stranger passes here. The new palace of the king rises between the town and Hymettos: it is of marble, every stone having been procured from the neighbouring quarries of Pentelicon. In the hall the portraits of the Greek heroes of the revolution have already been put up. The university is being built under the direction of Hansen, a Danish architect. A few churches and private dwellings of merchants and ministers grow up out of the earth like mushrooms, hour by hour; and who are the workmen? I was told they were nearly all Greeks—soldiers, peasants, robbers, who have taken up trowel, hammer, and saw; they have watched the foreign workmen, and then set up at once for masons, smiths, and carpenters. Truly the Greeks are a quick-witted race.

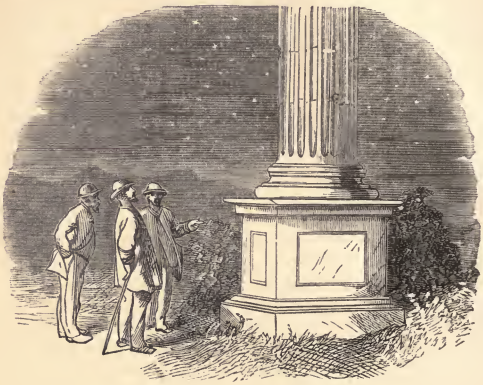
The first impression made by Athens surpassed the anticipations awakened in me at Naples. When I mentioned this, Ross told me of a Greek, from Chios, the island of Homer's birth, who was now staying here. He was a man who from his position and surroundings may be considered as well educated; but he had never yet seen a large town, and accordingly was quite astonished at the grandeur and luxury he found in the capital of Greece; every moment he was expressing his surprise at something he saw, and when a friend, who met him after he had been here a fortnight, suggested that now he must know Athens by heart, he exclaimed,

"Know it by heart! there 's no end to the wonders of a place like this! Always something new to hear or to see; how many amusements, how

many conveniences! Here are carriages for driving, here is Turkish music every day in front of the king's palace; here are coffee-houses with newspapers, and theatres where people sing and talk! It is a wonderful city!"

Thus he was astounded by the modern grandeur and luxury of Athens, while I found it simply very creditable in comparison with what I had seen and heard spoken of. Thus it is that we all form our judgments according to our experience and our own standard of excellence.

I had fancied that I should feel terribly strange and lonely here in



THE SOLITARY COLUMN.

Greece, so far from my own country; and, behold, it was here that I experienced the best feeling of home. My fellow-countrymen and German friends approached me with kindness. On the very day of my arrival, I was carried off to a Danish house, to that of Lüth, a Holsteiner, the Queen's chaplain, who is married to a Danish lady, whose younger sister lives with her. Here I met several Danes, and with them came a Hollander, our consul Travers, who speaks Danish very well. My first day was to finish with a visit to the theatre.

The theatre of Athens lies a little distance from the town. It has four tiers of boxes and is prettily decorated; but the most interesting

sight to me was that of the handsomely dressed spectators in boxes and pit. Here sat many beautiful Greek women, but I was told they all came from the islands, that very few Athenians were handsome. An Italian company were giving operas here. The performance was a mixture from various works; we heard the overtures to "Norma" and the "Bronze Horse," an act from the "Barber of Seville," and another from the "Thievish Magpie," and the whole concluded with a ballet.

As I have said, the theatre lies a short distance outside the city. It made a strange impression when, at midnight, after seeing the "Barber" and the "Thievish Magpie," the spectator suddenly stepped forth from the building, and found himself standing under an Oriental sky, all aflame with stars, so that the whole extent of the plain, with its encircling ridge of mountains, could be distinctly seen. The magnificent scenery of nature seemed to laugh to scorn the painted canvas imitations; and here, in the solitude, a drama was being enacted which showed how small everything within the theatre had been. The contrast from the mean theatre to this starlight night displayed the whole classic grandeur of Greece.

A single marble column stood by our way, among dust and weeds; nobody could tell to what temple it had belonged. The people declare it to be a pillar to which our Lord was bound when He was scourged, and assert that the Turks threw the pillar into the sea, but that it was brought back miraculously in the night. Now it stood solitary by the wayside, pointing in the starry night towards heaven.

THE BIRD OF POPULAR SONG.

It is winter-time. The earth wears a snowy garment, and looks like marble hewn out of the rock; the air is bright and clear; the wind is sharp as a well-tempered sword, and the trees stand like branches of white coral or blooming almond twigs, and here it is keen as on the lofty Alps.

The night is splendid in the gleam of the northern lights, and in the glitter of innumerable twinkling stars.

But we sit in the warm room, by the hot stove, and talk about the old times. And we listen to this story·

By the open sea was a giant's grave; and on the grave-mound sat at midnight the spirit of the buried hero, who had been a king. The golden circlet gleamed on his brow, his hair fluttered in the wind, and he was clad in steel and iron. He bent his head mournfully, and sighed in deep sorrow, as an unquiet spirit might sigh.

And a ship came sailing by. Presently the sailors lowered the anchor, and landed. Among them was a singer, and he approached the royal spirit, and said,

"Why mournest thou, and wherefore dost thou suffer thus?"

Then the dead man answered,

"No one hath sung the deeds of my life; they are dead and forgotten: song doth not carry them forth over the lands, nor into the hearts of men; therefore I have no rest and no peace."

And he spoke of his works, and of his warlike deeds, which his contemporaries had known, but which had not been sung, because there was no singer among his companions.

Then the old bard struck the strings of his harp, and sang of the youthful courage of the hero, of the strength of the man, and of the greatness of his good deeds. Then the face of the dead one gleamed like the margin of the cloud in the moonlight. Gladly and of good courage, the form arose in splendour and in majesty, and vanished like the glancing of the northern light. Naught was to be seen but the green turfy mound, with the stones on which no Runic record has been graven; but at the last sound of the harp there soared over the hill, as though he had fluttered from the harp, a little bird, a charming singing-bird, with the ringing voice of the thrush, with the moving pathos of the human heart, with a voice that told of home, like the voice that is heard by the bird of passage. The singing-bird soared away, over mountain and valley, over field and wood—he was the Bird of Popular Song, who never dies.

We hear his song—we hear it now in the room while the white bees are swarming without, and the storm clutches the windows. The bird sings not alone the requiem of heroes; he sings also sweet gentle songs of love, so many and so warm, of northern fidelity and truth. He has stories in words and in tones; he has proverbs and snatches of proverb; song, which, like Runes laid under a dead man's tongue, force him to speak; and thus Popular Song tells of the land of his birth.

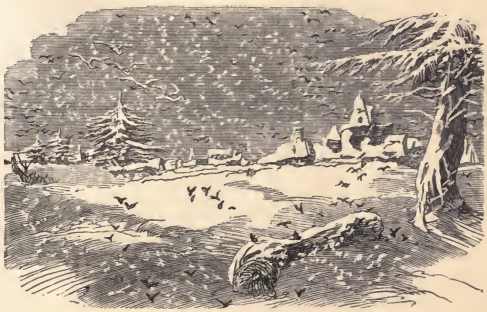
In the old heathen days, in the times of the Vikings, the popular speech was enshrined in the harp of the bard.

In the days of knightly castles, when the strong fist held the scales of justice, when only might was right, and a peasant and a dog were of

equal importance, where did the Bird of Song find shelter and protection? Neither violence nor stupidity gave him a thought.

But in the gabled window of the knightly castle, the lady of the castle sat with the parchment roll before her, and wrote down the old recollections in song and legend, while near her stood the old woman from the wood, and the travelling pedlar who went wandering through the country. As these told their tales, there fluttered around them, with twittering and song, the Bird of Popular Song, who never dies so long as the earth has a hill upon which his foot may rest.

And now he looks in upon us and sings. Without are the night and



THE SNOW-STORM.

the snow-storm: he lays the Runes beneath our tongues, and we know the land of our home. Heaven speaks to us in our native tongue, in the voice of the Bird of Popular Song; the old remembrances awake, the faded colours glow with a fresh lustre, and story and song pour us a blessed draught which lifts up our minds and our thoughts, so that the evening becomes as a Christmas festival.

The snow-flakes chase each other, the ice cracks, the storm rules without, for he has the might, he is lord—but not the LORD OF ALL.

It is winter-time. The wind is sharp as a two-edged sword, the snow-flakes chase each other: it seemed as though it had been snowing for days and weeks, and the snow lies like a great mountain over the whole

town, like a heavy dream of the winter night. Everything on the earth is hidden away; only the gilt cross of the church, the symbol of faith, arises over the snow grave, and gleams in the blue air and in the bright sunshine.

And over the buried town fly the birds of heaven.

First comes the band of sparrows: they pipe at every trifle in the streets and lanes, in the nests and the houses; they have stories to tell about the front buildings and the back buildings. "We know the buried town," they say; "everything living in it is piep! piep! piep!"

The black ravens and crows flew on over the white snow.

"Grub, grub!" they cried. "There 's something to be got down there; something to swallow, and that 's most important. That 's the opinion of most of them down there, and the opinion is goo—goo—good!"

The wild swans come flying on whirring pinions, and sing of the noble and the great, that will still sprout in the hearts of men, down in the town which is resting beneath its snowy veil.

No death is there—life reigns yonder; we hear it on the notes that swell onward like the tones of the church organ, which seize us like sounds from the elf-hill, like the songs of Ossian, like the rushing swoop of the wandering spirits' wings. What harmony! That harmony speaks to our hearts, and lifts up our souls!—It is the Bird of Popular Song whom we hear. And at this moment the warm breath of heaven blows down from the sky. There are gaps in the snowy mountains, the sun shines into the clefts; spring is coming, the birds are returning, and new races are coming with the same home sounds in their hearts.

Hear the story of the year: "The night of the snow-storm, the heavy dream of the winter night, all shall be dissolved, all shall rise again in the beauteous notes of the Bird of Popular Song who never dies!"

THE TOAD.

The well was deep, and therefore the rope had to be a long one; it was heavy work turning the handle when any one had to raise a bucket-full of water over the edge of the well. Though the water was clear, the sun never looked down far enough into the well to mirror itself in the waters; but as far as its beams could reach, green things grew forth between the stones in the sides of the well.

Down below dwelt a family of the Toad race. They had, in fact, come head-over-heels down the well, in the person of the old Mother-

Toad, who was still alive. The green Frogs, who had been established there a long time, and swam about in the water, called them "well-guests." But the new-comers seemed to have determined to stay where they were, for they found it very agreeable living "in a dry place," as they called the wet stones.

The Mother-Frog had once been a traveller. She happened to be in the water-bucket when it was drawn up, but the light became too strong for her, and she got a pain in her eyes. Fortunately she scrambled out of the bucket; but she fell into the water with a terrible flop, and had to lie sick for three days with pains in her back. She certainly had not much to tell of the things up above; but she knew this, and all the Frogs knew it, that the well was not all the world. The Mother-Toad might have told this and that, if she had chosen, but she never answered when they asked her anything, and so they left off asking.

"She's thick, and fat, and ugly," said the young green Frogs; "and her children will be just as ugly as she is."

"That may be," retorted the Mother-Toad; "but one of them has a jewel in his head, or else I have the jewel."

The young Frogs listened and stared; and as these words did not please them, they made grimaces, and dived down under the water. But the little Toads kicked up their hind legs from mere pride, for each of them thought that he must have the jewel; and then they sat and held their heads quite still. But at length they asked what it was that made them so proud, and what kind of a thing a jewel might be.

"Oh, it is such a splendid and precious thing, that I cannot describe it," said the Mother-Toad. "It's something which one carries about for one's own pleasure, and that makes other people angry. But don't ask me any questions, for I shan't answer you."

"Well, *I* haven't got the jewel," said the smallest of the Toads: she was as ugly as a toad can be. "Why should I have such a precious thing? And if it makes others angry, it can't give me any pleasure. No, I only wish I could get to the edge of the well, and look out; it must be beautiful up there."

"You'd better stay where you are," said the old Mother-Toad; "for you know everything here, and you can tell what you have. Take care of the bucket, for it will crush you to death; and even if you get into it safely, you may fall out: and it's not every one who falls so cleverly as I did, and gets away with whole eggs and whole bones."

"Quack!" said the little Toad; and that's just as if one of us were to say, "Aha!"

She had an immense desire to get to the edge of the well, and to look

over; she felt such a longing for the green—up there; and the next morning, when it chanced that the bucket was being drawn up, filled with water, and stopped for a moment just in front of the stone on which the Toad sat, the little creature's heart moved within it, and our Toad jumped into the filled bucket—which presently was drawn to the top, and emptied out.

THE TOAD'S RECEPTION IN THE WORLD.

"Ugh, you beast!" said the farm labourer who emptied the bucket, when he saw the toad. "You're the ugliest thing I've seen for one while." And he made a kick with his wooden shoe at the Toad, which just escaped being crushed by managing to scramble into the nettles which grew high by the well's brink. Here she saw stem by stem, but she looked up also: the sun shone through the leaves, which were quite transparent; and she felt as a person would feel who steps suddenly into a great forest, where the sun looks in between the branches and leaves.

"It's much nicer here than down in the well! I should like to stay here my whole life long!" said the little Toad. So she lay there for an hour, yes, for two hours. "I wonder what is to be found up here? As I have come so far, I must try to go still farther." And so she crawled on as fast as she could crawl, and got out upon the highway, where the sun shone upon her, and the dust powdered her all over as she marched across the way.

"I've got to a dry place now, and no mistake," said the Toad. "It's almost too much of a good thing here; it tickles one so."

She came to the ditch; and forget-me-nots were growing there, and

meadow-sweet; and a very little way off was a hedge of whitethorn, and elder bushes grew there too, and bindweed with white flowers. Gay colours were to be seen here, and a butterfly, too, was flitting by. The Toad thought it was a flower which had broken loose that it might look about better in the world, which was quite a natural thing to do

"If one could only make such a journey as that!" said the Toad. "Croak! how capital that would be."

Eight days and eight nights she stayed by the well, and experienced no want of provisions. On the ninth day she thought, "Forward! onward!" But what could she find more charming and beautiful? Perhaps a little toad or a few green frogs. During the last night there had been a sound borne on the breeze, as if there were cousins in the neighbourhood.

"It 's a glorious thing to live! glorious to get out of the well, and to lie among the stinging-nettles, and to crawl along the dusty road. But onward, onward! that we may find frogs or a little toad. We can't do without that; nature alone is not enough for one." And so she went forward on her journey.

She came out into the open field, to a great pond, round about which grew reeds; and she walked into it.

"It will be too damp for you here," said the Frogs, "but you are very welcome! Are you a he or a she? But it doesn't matter · you are equally welcome."

And she was invited to the concert in the evening—the family concert: great enthusiasm and thin voices; we know the sort of thing. No refreshments were given, only there was plenty to drink, for the whole pond was free.

"Now I shall resume my journey," said the little Toad; for she always felt a longing for something better.

She saw the stars shining, so large and so bright, and she saw the moon gleaming; and then she saw the sun rise, and mount higher and higher.

"Perhaps, after all, I am still in a well, only in a larger well. I must get higher yet; I feel a great restlessness and longing." And when the moon became round and full, the poor creature thought, "I wonder if that is the bucket, which will be let down, and into which I must step to get higher up? Or is the sun the great bucket? How great it is! how bright it is! It can take up all. I must look out, that I may not miss the opportunity. Oh, how it seems to shine in my head! I don't think the jewel can shine brighter. But I haven't the jewel; not that I cry about that—no I must go higher up, into splendour and joy!

I feel so confident, and yet I am afraid. It 's a difficult step to take, and yet it must be taken. Onward, therefore, straight onward!"

She took a few steps, such as a crawling animal may take, and soon found herself on a road beside which people dwelt: here there were flower gardens as well as kitchen gardens. And she sat down to rest by a kitchen garden.

"What a number of different creatures there are that I never knew! and how beautiful and great the world is! But one must look round in it, and not stay in one spot." And then she hopped into the kitchen garden. "How green it is here! how beautiful it is here!"

"I know that," said the Caterpillar on the leaf; "my leaf is the largest here. It hides half the world from me, but I don't care for the world."

"Cluck! cluck!" And some fowls came: they tripped about in the cabbage garden. The Fowl who marched at the head of them had a long sight, and she spied the Caterpillar on the green leaf, and pecked at it, so that the Caterpillar fell on the ground, where it twisted and writhed.

The Fowl looked at it first with one eye and then with the other, for she did not know what the end of this writhing would be.

"It doesn't do that with a good will," thought the Fowl, and lifted up her head to peck at the Caterpillar

The Toad was so horrified at this, that she came crawling straight up towards the Fowl.

"Aha! it has allies," quoth the Fowl. "Just look at the crawling thing!" And then the Fowl turned away. "I don't care for the little green morsel: it would only tickle my throat." The other fowls took the same view of it, and they all turned away together.

"I writhed myself free," said the Caterpillar. "What a good thing it is when one has presence of mind! But the hardest thing remains to be done, and that is to get on my leaf again. Where is it?"

And the little Toad came up and expressed her sympathy. She was glad that in her ugliness she had frightened the fowls.

"What do you mean by that?" cried the Caterpillar. "I wriggled myself free from the Fowl. You are very disagreeable to look at. Cannot I be left in peace on my own property? Now I smell cabbage; now I am near my leaf. Nothing is so beautiful as property. But I must go higher up."

"Yes, higher up," said the little Toad; "higher up! She feels just as I do; but she 's not in a good humour to-day. That 's because of the fright. We all want to go higher up." And she looked up as high as ever she could.

The stork sat in his nest on the roof of the farm-house. He clapped with his beak, and the mother-stork clapped with hers.

"How high up they live!" thought the Toad. "If one could only get as high as that!"

In the farm-house lived two young students; the one was a poet and the other a scientific searcher into the secrets of nature. The one sang and wrote joyously of everything that God had created, and how it was mirrored in his heart. He sang it out clearly, sweetly, richly, in well-

THE STUDENTS.

sounding verses; while the other investigated created matter itself, and even cut it open where need was. He looked upon God's creation as a great sum in arithmetic—subtracted, multiplied, and tried to know it within and without, and to talk with understanding concerning it; and that was a very sensible thing; and he spoke joyously and cleverly of it. They were good, joyful men, those two.

"There sits a good specimen of a toad," said the naturalist. "I must have that fellow in a bottle of spirits."

"You have two of them already," replied the poet. "Let the thing sit there and enjoy its life."

"But it 's so wonderfully ugly," persisted the first.

"Yes; if we could find the jewel in its head," said the poet, "I too should be for cutting it open."

"A jewel!" cried the naturalist. "You seem to know a great deal about natural history."

"But is there not something beautiful in the popular belief that just as the toad is the ugliest of animals, it should often carry the most precious jewel in its head? Is it not just the same thing with men? What a jewel that was that Æsop had, and still more, Socrates!"

The Toad did not hear any more, nor did she understand half of what she had heard. The two friends walked on, and thus she escaped the fate of being bottled up in spirits.

"Those two also were speaking of the jewel," said the Toad to herself. "What a good thing that I have not got it! I might have been in a very disagreeable position."

Now there was a clapping on the roof of the farm-house. Father-Stork was making a speech to his family, and his family was glancing down at the two young men in the kitchen garden.

"Man is the most conceited creature!" said the Stork. "Listen how their jaws are wagging; and for all that they can't clap properly. They boast of their gifts of eloquence and their language! Yes, a fine language truly! Why, it changes in every day's journey we make. One of them doesn't understand another. Now, *we* can speak our language over the whole earth—up in the North and in Egypt. And men are not able to fly, moreover. They rush along by means of an invention they call 'railway;' but they often break their necks over it. It makes my beak turn cold when I think of it. The world could get on without men. We could do without them very well, so long as we only keep frogs and earthworms."

"That was a powerful speech," thought the little Toad. "What a great man that is yonder! and how high he sits! Higher than ever I saw any one sit yet; and how he can swim!" she cried, as the Stork soared away through the air with outspread pinions.

And the Mother-Stork began talking in the nest, and told about Egypt, and the waters of the Nile, and the incomparable mud that was to be found in that strange land; and all this sounded new and very charming to the little Toad.

"I must go to Egypt!" said she. "If the stork or one of his young ones would only take me! I would oblige him in return. Yes, I shall get to Egypt, for I feel so happy! All the longing and all the pleasure that I feel is much better than having a jewel in one's head."

And it was just she who had the jewel. That jewel was the continual striving and desire to go upward—ever upward. It gleamed in her head, gleamed in joy, beamed brightly in her longings.

Then, suddenly, up came the Stork. He had seen the Toad in the grass, and stooped down and seized the little creature anything but gently. The Stork's beak pinched her, and the wind whistled; it was

UPWARD!

not exactly agreeable, but she was going upward—upward towards Egypt—and she knew it; and that was why her eyes gleamed, and a spark seemed to fly out of them.

"Quunk!—ah!"

The body was dead—the Toad was killed! But the spark that had shot forth from her eyes: what became of that?

The sunbeam took it up; the sunbeam carried the jewel from the head of the Toad. Whither?

Ask not the naturalist; rather ask the poet. He will tell it thee under the guise of a fairy tale; and the Caterpillar on the cabbage, and the Stork family belong to the story. Think! the Caterpillar is changed, and turns into a beautiful butterfly; the Stork family flies over mountains and seas, to the distant Africa, and yet finds the shortest way home to the same country—to the same roof. Nay, that is almost too improbable; and yet it is true. You may ask the naturalist, he will confess it is so; and you know it yourself, for you have seen it.

But the jewel in the head of the toad?

Seek it in the sun; see it there if you can.

The brightness is too dazzling there. We have not yet such eyes as

can see into the glories which God has created, but we shall receive them by-and-bye; and that will be the most beautiful story of all, and we shall all have our share in it.

THE PORTER'S SON.

The General lived in the grand first floor, and the porter lived in the cellar. There was a great distance between the two families—the whole of the ground floor, and the difference in rank; but they lived in the same house, and both had a view of the street and of the courtyard. In the courtyard was a grass-plot, on which grew a blooming acacia tree (when it was in bloom), and under this tree sat occasionally the finely-dressed nurse, with the still more finely-dressed child of the General—little Emily. Before them danced about barefoot the little son of the porter, with his great brown eyes and dark hair; and the little girl smiled at him, and stretched out her hands towards him; and when the General saw that from the window, he would nod his head, and cry, "Charming!" The General's lady (who was so young that she might very well have been her husband's daughter from an early marriage) never came to the window that looked upon the courtyard. She had given orders, though, that the boy might play his antics to amuse her child, but must never touch it. The nurse punctually obeyed the gracious lady's orders.

The sun shone in upon the people in the grand first floor, and upon the people in the cellar; the acacia tree was covered with blossoms, and they fell off, and next year new ones came. The tree bloomed, and the porter's little son bloomed too, and looked like a fresh tulip.

The General's little daughter became delicate and pale, like the leaf of the acacia blossom. She seldom came down to the tree now, for she took the air in a carriage. She drove out with her mamma, and then she would always nod at the porter's George; yes, she used even to kiss her hand to him, till her mamma said she was too old to do that now.

One morning George was sent up to carry the General the letters and newspapers that had been delivered at the porter's room in the morning. As he was running upstairs, just as he passed the door of

the sand-box he heard a faint piping. He thought it was some young chicken that had strayed there and was raising cries of distress; but it was the General's little daughter, decked out in lace and finery.

GEORGE AMUSING THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER.

"Don't tell papa and mamma," she whimpered; "they would be angry."

"What 's the matter, little missie?" asked George.

"It 's all on fire!" she answered. "It 's burning with a bright flame!"

George hurried upstairs to the General's apartments; he opened the door of the nursery. The window-curtain was almost entirely burnt, and the wooden curtain-pole was one mass of flame. George sprang upon a chair he brought in haste, and pulled down the burning articles, and alarmed the people. But for him the house would have been burnt down.

The General and his lady cross-questioned little Emily.

"I only took just one lucifer-match," she said, "and it was burning directly, and the curtain was burning too. I spat at it, to put it out; I spat at it as much as ever I could, but I could not put it out; so I ran away and hid myself, for papa and mamma would be angry."

"I spat!" cried the General's lady; "what an expression! Did you ever hear your papa and mamma talk about spitting? You must have got that from downstairs!"

And George had a penny given him. But this penny did not go to the baker's shop, but into the savings-box; and soon there was so many pennies in the savings-box, that he could buy a paint-box, and colour the drawings he made—and he had a great number of drawings. They seemed to shoot out of his pencil and out of his fingers'-ends. His first coloured pictures he presented to Emily.

"Charming!" said the General; and even the General's lady acknowledged that it was easy to see what the boy had meant to draw. "He has genius." Those were the words that were carried down into the cellar.

The General and his gracious lady were grand people. They had two coats of arms on their carriage, a coat of arms for each of them; and the gracious lady had had this coat of arms embroidered on both sides of every bit of linen she had, and even on her nightcap and her dressing-bag. One of the coats of arms, the one that belonged to her, was a very dear one; it had been bought for hard cash by her father, for he had not been born with it, nor had she; she had come into the world too early, seven years before the coat of arms, and most people remembered this circumstance, but the family did not remember it. A man might well have a bee in his bonnet, when he had such a coat of arms to carry as that, let alone having to carry two; and the General's wife had a bee in hers when she drove to the Court ball, as stiff and as proud as you please.

The General was old and grey, but he had a good seat on horseback, and he knew it; and he rode out every day, with a groom behind him at a proper distance. When he came to a party, he looked somehow as if he were riding into the room upon his high horse; and he had

orders, too, such a number that no one would have believed it; but that was not his fault. As a young man, he had taken part in the great autumn reviews which were held in those days. He had an anecdote that he told about those days, the only one he knew. A subaltern under his orders had cut off one of the princes, and taken him prisoner, and the Prince had been obliged to ride through the town with a little band of captured soldiers, himself a prisoner behind the General. This was an ever-memorable event, and was always told over and over again every year by the General, who, moreover, always repeated the remarkable

GEORGE AND EMILY'S FEAST.

words he had used when he returned his sword to the Prince: those words were, "Only my subaltern could have taken your Highness prisoner; I could never have done it!" And the Prince had replied, "You are incomparable." In a real war the General had never taken part. When war came into the country, he had gone on a diplomatic career to foreign Courts. He spoke the French language so fluently that he had almost forgotten his own; he could dance well, he could ride well, and orders grew on his coat in an astounding way. The sentries presented arms to him, one of the most beautiful girls presented arms to him, and became the General's lady, and in time they had a pretty, charming child, that seemed as if it had dropped from heaven, it was so pretty; and the porter's son danced before it in the courtyard, as soon as it could understand it, and gave her all his coloured pictures; and little

Emily looked at them, and was pleased, and tore them to pieces. She was pretty and delicate indeed.

"My little Roseleaf!" cried the General's lady, "thou art born to wed a prince."

The prince was already at the door, but they knew nothing of it: people don't see far beyond the threshold.

"The day before yesterday our boy divided his bread and butter with her!" said the porter's wife. "There was neither cheese nor meat upon it, but she liked it as well as if it had been roast beef. There would have been a fine noise if the General and his wife had seen the feast; but they did not see it."

George had divided his bread and butter with little Emily, and he would have divided his heart with her, if it would have pleased her. He was a good boy, brisk and clever, and he went to the night school in the Academy now, to learn to draw properly. Little Emily was getting on with her education too, for she spoke French with her "bonne," and had a dancing master.

"George will be confirmed at Easter," said the porter's wife; for George had got so far as this.

"It would be the best thing, now, to make an apprentice of him," said his father. "It must be to some good calling,—and then he would be out of the house."

"He would have to sleep out of the house," said George's mother. 'It is not easy to find a master who has room for him at night; and we shall have to provide him with clothes too. The little bit of eating that he wants can be managed for him, for he 's quite happy with a few boiled potatoes; and he gets taught for nothing. Let the boy go his own way. You will say that he will be our joy some day, and the Professor says so too."

The confirmation suit was ready: the mother had worked it herself; but the tailor who did repairs had cut them out, and a capital cutter-out he was.

"If he had had a better position, and been able to keep a workshop and journeymen," the porter's wife said, "he might have been a Court tailor."

The clothes were ready, and the candidate for confirmation was ready. On his confirmation day, George received a great pinchbeck watch from his godfather, the old ironmonger's shopman, the richest of his godfathers. The watch was an old and tried servant: it always went too fast, but that is better than to be lagging behind. That was

a costly present: and from the General's apartment there arrived a hymn-book bound in morocco, sent by the little lady to whom George had given pictures. At the beginning of the book his name was written, and her name, as "his gracious patroness." These words had been written at the dictation of the General's lady, and the General had read the inscription, and pronounced it "Charming!"

"That is really a great attention from a family of such position," said the porter's wife; and George was sent upstairs to show himself in his confirmation clothes, with the hymn-book in his hand.

The General's lady was sitting very much wrapped up, and had the bad headache she always had when time hung heavy upon her hands. She looked at George very pleasantly, and wished him all prosperity, and that he might never have her headache. The General was walking about in his dressing-gown: he had a cap with a long tassel on his head, and Russian boots with red tops on his feet. He walked three times up and down the room, absorbed in his own thoughts and recollections, and then stopped, and said:

"So little George is a confirmed Christian now. Be a good man, and honour those in authority over you. Some day, when you are an old man, you can say that the General gave you this precept."

That was a longer speech than the General was accustomed to make, and then he went back to his ruminations, and looked very aristocratic. But of all that George heard and saw up there, little Miss Emily remained most clear in his thoughts. How graceful she was, how gentle, and fluttering, and pretty she looked. If she were to be drawn, it ought to be on a soap-bubble. About her dress, about her yellow curled hair, there was a fragrance as of a fresh-blown rose; and to think that he had once divided his bread and butter with her, and that she had eaten it with enormous appetite, and nodded to him at every second mouthful! Did she remember anything about it? Yes, certainly, for she had given him the beautiful hymn-book in remembrance of this; and when the first new moon in the first new year after this event came round, he took a piece of bread, a penny, and his hymn-book, and went out into the open air, and opened the book to see what psalm he should turn up. It was a psalm of praise and thanksgiving. Then he opened the book again to see what would turn up for little Emily. He took great pains not to open the book in the place where the funeral hymns were, and yet he got one that referred to the grave and death. But then he thought this was not a thing in which one must believe; for all that he was startled when soon afterwards the pretty little girl had to lie in bed, and the doctor's carriage stopped at the gate every day

"They will not keep her with them," said the porter's wife. "The good God knows whom He will summon to Himself."

But they kept her after all; and George drew pictures and sent them to her. He drew the Czar's palace; the old Kremlin at Moscow, just as it stood, with towers and cupolas; and these cupolas looked like gigantic green and gold cucumbers, at least in George's drawing. Little Emily was highly pleased, and consequently, when a week had elapsed, George sent her a few more pictures, all with buildings in them; for, you see, she could imagine all sorts of things inside the windows and doors.

He drew a Chinese house, with bells hanging from every one of the sixteen storeys. He drew two Grecian temples with slender marble pillars, and with steps all round them. He drew a Norwegian church. It was easy to see that this church had been built entirely of wood, hewn out and wonderfully put together; every storey looked as if it had rockers, like a cradle. But the most beautiful of all was the castle, drawn on one of the leaves, and which he called "Emily's Castle." This was the kind of place in which she must live. That is what George had thought, and consequently he had put into this building whatever he thought most beautiful in all the others. It had carved woodwork, like the Norwegian church; marble pillars, like the Grecian temple; bells in every storey; and was crowned with cupolas, green and gilded, like those of the Kremlin of the Czar. It was a real child's castle, and under every window was written what the hall or the room inside was intended to be; for instance: "Here Emily sleeps;" "Here Emily dances;" "Here Emily plays at receiving her visitors." It was a real pleasure to look at the castle, and right well was the castle looked at accordingly.

"Charming!" said the General.

But the old Count—for there was an old Count there, who was still grander than the General, and had a castle of his own—said nothing at all; he heard that it had been designed and drawn by the porter's little son. Not that he was so very little, either, for he had already been confirmed. The old Count looked at the pictures, and had his own thoughts as he did so.

One day, when it was very gloomy, grey, wet weather, the brightest of days dawned for George; for the Professor at the Academy called him into his room.

"Listen to me, my friend," said the Professor; "I want to speak to you. The Lord has been good to you in giving you abilities, and He has also been good in placing you among kind people. The old Count

at the corner yonder has been speaking to me about you. I have also seen your sketches; but we will not say any more about those, for there is a good deal to correct in them. But from this time forward you may come twice a week to my drawing-class, and then you will soon learn how to do them better. I think there 's more of the architect than of the painter in you. You will have time to think that over; but go across to the old Count this very day, and thank God for having sent you such a friend."

It was a great house—the house of the old Count at the corner. Round the windows elephants and dromedaries were carved, all from the old times; but the old Count loved the new time best, and what it brought, whether it came from the first floor, or from the cellar, or from the attic.

"I think," said the porter's wife, "the grander people are, the fewer airs do they give themselves. How kind and straightforward the old Count is! and he talks exactly like you and me. Now, the General and his lady can't do that. And George was fairly wild with delight yesterday at the good reception he met with at the Count's; and so am I today, after speaking to the great man. Wasn't it a good thing that we did not bind George apprentice to a handicraftsman? for he has abilities of his own."

"But they must be helped on by others," said the father.

"That help he has got now," rejoined the mother; "for the Count spoke out quite clearly and distinctly."

"But I fancy it began with the General," said the father, "and we must thank them too."

"Let us do so with all my heart," cried the mother, "though I fancy we have not much to thank them for. I will thank the good God; and I will thank Him, too, for letting little Emily get well."

Emily was getting on bravely, and George got on bravely too: in the course of the year he won the little silver prize medal of the Academy, and afterwards he gained the great one too.

"It would have been better, after all, if he had been apprenticed to a handicraftsman," said the porter's wife, weeping; "for then we could have kept him with us. What is he to do in Rome? I shall never get a sight of him again, not even if he comes back; but that he won't do, the dear boy."

"It is fortune and fame for him," said the father.

"Yes, thank you, my friend," said the mother; "you are saying what you do not mean. You are just as sorrowful as I am."

And it was all true about the sorrow and the journey. But everybody said it was a great piece of good fortune for the young fellow. And he had to take leave, and of the General too. The General's lady did not show herself, for she had her bad headache. On this occasion the General told his only anecdote, about what he had said to the Prince, and how the Prince had said to him, "You are incomparable." And he held out a languid hand to George.

Emily gave George her hand too, and looked almost sorry; and George was the most sorry of all.

Time goes by when one has something to do; and it goes by, too, when one has nothing to do. The time is equally long, but not equally useful. It was useful to George, and did not seem long at all, except when he happened to be thinking of his home. How might the good folks be getting on, upstairs and downstairs? Yes, there was writing about that, and many things can be put into a letter,—bright sunshine and dark heavy days. Both of these were in the letter which brought the news that his father was dead, and that his mother was alone now. She wrote that Emily had come down to see her, and had been to her like an angel of comfort; and concerning herself, she added that she had been allowed to keep her situation as porteress.

The General's lady kept a diary, and in this diary was recorded every ball she attended and every visit she received. The diary was illustrated by the insertion of the visiting cards of the diplomatic circle and of the most noble families; and the General's lady was proud of it. The diary kept growing through a long time, and amid many severe headaches, and through a long course of half-nights, that is to say, of Court balls. Emily had now been to a Court ball for the first time. Her mother had worn a bright red dress, with black lace, in the Spanish style; the daughter had been attired in white, fair and delicate; green silk ribbons fluttered like flag-leaves among her yellow locks, and on her head she wore a wreath of water-lilies; her eyes were so blue and clear, her mouth was so delicate and red, she looked like a little water spirit, as beautiful as such a spirit can be imagined. The Princes danced with her, one after another, of course; and the General's lady had not a headache for a week afterwards.

But the first ball was not the last, and Emily could not stand it; it was a good thing, therefore, that summer brought with it rest, and exercise in the open air. The family had been invited by the old Count to visit him at his castle. That was a castle with a garden which was worth seeing. Part of this garden was laid out quite in the style of

the old days, with stiff green hedges; you walked as if between green walls with peep-holes in them. Box trees and yew trees stood there trimmed into the form of stars and pyramids, and water sprang from fountains in large grottoes lined with shells; all around stood figures of the most beautiful stone—that could be seen in their clothes as well as in their faces; every flower-bed had a different shape, and represented a fish, or a coat of arms, or a monogram. That was the French part of the garden; and from this part the visitor came into what appeared like the green fresh forest, where the trees might grow as they chose, and accordingly they were great and glorious—the grass was green, and beautiful to walk on, and it was regularly cut, and rolled, and swept, and tended: that was the English part of the garden.

"Old time and new time," said the Count, "here they run well into one another. In two years the building itself will put on a proper appearance, there will be a complete metamorphosis in beauty and improvement. I shall show the drawings, and I shall show you the architect, for he is to dine here to-day."

"Charming!" said the General.

"'T is like Paradise here," said the General's lady; "and yonder you have a knight's castle!"

"That 's my poultry-house," observed the Count. "The pigeons live in the tower, the turkeys in the first floor, but old Elsie rules in the ground floor. She has apartments on all sides of her. The sitting hens have their own room, and the hens with chickens have theirs; and the ducks have their own particular door, leading to the water."

"Charming!" repeated the General.

And all sallied forth to see these wonderful things. Old Elsie stood in the room on the ground floor, and by her side stood Architect George. He and Emily now met for the first time after several years, and they met in the poultry-house.

Yes, there he stood, and was handsome enough to be looked at. His face was frank and energetic; he had black shining hair, and a smile about his mouth, which said, "I have a brownie that sits in my ear, and knows every one of you, inside and out." Old Elsie had pulled off her wooden shoes, and stood there in her stockings, to do honour to the noble guests. The hens clucked, and the cocks crowed, and the ducks waddled to and fro, and said, "Quack, quack!" But the fair, pale girl, the friend of his childhood, the daughter of the General, stood there with a rosy blush on her usually pale cheeks, and her eyes opened wide, and her mouth seemed to speak without uttering a word, and the greeting he received from her was the most beautiful greeting a young

man can desire from a young lady, if they are not related, or have not danced many times together, and she and the architect had never danced together.

The Count shook hands with him, and introduced him.

"He is not altogether a stranger, our young friend George."

The General's lady bowed to him, and the General's daughter was very nearly giving him her hand; but she did not give it to him.

"Our little Master George!" said the General. "Old friends! Charming!"

"You have become quite an Italian," said the General's lady, "and I presume you speak the language like a native?"

"My wife sings the language, but she does not speak it," observed the General.

At dinner, George sat at the right hand of Emily, whom the General had taken down, while the Count led in the General's lady.

Mr. George talked and told of his travels; and he could talk well, and was the life and soul of the table, though the old Count could have been it too. Emily sat silent, but she listened, and her eyes gleamed, but she said nothing.

In the verandah, among the flowers, she and George stood together: the rose-bushes concealed them. And George was speaking again, for he took the lead now.

"Many thanks for the kind consideration you showed my old mother," he said. "I know that you went down to her on the night when my father died, and you stayed with her till his eyes were closed. My heartiest thanks!"

He took Emily's hand, and kissed it—he might do so on such an occasion. She blushed deeply, but pressed his hand, and looked at him with her dear blue eyes.

"Your mother was a dear soul!" she said. "How fond she was of her son! And she let me read all your letters, so that I almost believe I know you. How kind you were to me when I was a little girl! You used to give me pictures."

"Which you tore in two," said George.

"No, I have still your drawing of the castle."

"I must build the castle in reality now," said George; and he became quite warm at his own words.

The General and the General's lady talked to each other in their room about the porter's son — how he knew how to behave, and to express himself with the greatest propriety.

"He might be a tutor," said the General.

"Intellect!" said the General's lady; but she did not say anything more.

IN THE VERANDAH.

During the beautiful summer-time Mr. George several times visited the Count at his castle; and he was missed when he did not come.

"How much the good God has given you that he has not given to us poor mortals," said Emily to him. "Are you sure you are very grateful for it?"

It flattered George that the lovely young girl should look up to him, and he thought then that Emily had unusually good abilities. And the General felt more and more convinced that George was no cellar-child.

"His mother was a very good woman," he observed. "It is only right I should do her that justice now she is in her grave."

The summer passed away, and the winter came, and again there was talk about Mr. George. He was highly respected, and was received in the first circles: the General had met him at a Court ball.

And now there was a ball to be given in the General's house for Emily, and could Mr. George be invited to it?

"He whom the King invites can be invited by the General also," said

the General, and drew himself up till he stood quite an inch higher than before.

Mr. George *was* invited, and he came; princes and counts came, and they danced, one better than the other. But Emily could only dance one dance—the first; for she made a false step—nothing of consequence; but her foot hurt her, so that she had to be careful, and leave off dancing, and look at the others. So she sat and looked on, and the architect stood by her side.

"I suppose you are giving her the whole history of St. Peter's," said the General, as he passed by; and smiled, like the personification of patronage.

With the same patronizing smile he received Mr. George a few days afterwards. The young man came, no doubt, to return thanks for the invitation to the ball. What else could it be? But indeed there was something else, something very astonishing and startling. He spoke words of sheer lunacy, so that the General could hardly believe his own ears. It was "the height of rhodomontade," an offer, quite an inconceivable offer—Mr. George came to ask the hand of Emily in marriage!

"Man!" cried the General, and his brain seemed to be boiling. "I don't understand you at all. What is it you say? What is it you want? I don't know you. Sir! Man! What possesses you to break into my house? And am I to stand here and listen to you?" He stepped backwards into his bed-room, locked the door behind him, and left Mr. George standing alone. George stood still for a few minutes, and then turned round and left the room. Emily was standing in the corridor.

"My father has answered?" she said, and her voice trembled.

George pressed her hand.

"He has escaped me," he replied; "but a better time will come."

There were tears in Emily's eyes, but in the young man's eyes shone courage and confidence; and the sun shone through the window, and cast his beams on the pair, and gave them his blessing.

The General sat in his room, bursting hot. Yes, he was still boiling until he boiled over in the exclamation, "Lunacy! porter! madness!"

Not an hour was over before the General's lady knew it out of the General's own mouth. She called Emily, and remained alone with her.

"You poor child," she said; "to insult you so! to insult us so! There are tears in your eyes, too, but they become you well. You look beautiful in tears. You look as I looked on my wedding-day. Weep on, my sweet Emily."

"Yes, that I must," said Emily, "if you and my father do not say 'yes.'"

"Child!" screamed the General's lady; "you are ill! You are talking wildly, and I shall have a most terrible headache! Oh, what a misfortune is coming upon our house! Don't make your mother die, Emily, or you will have no mother."

And the eyes of the General's lady were wet, for she could not bear to think of her own death.

In the newspapers there was an announcement. "Mr. George has been elected Professor of the Fifth Class, Number Eight."

"It's a pity that his parents are dead, and cannot read it," said the new porter people, who now lived in the cellar under the General's apartments. They knew that the Professor had been born and had grown up within their four walls.

"Now he'll get a salary," said the man.

"Yes, that's not much for a poor child," said the woman.

"Eighteen dollars a year," said the man. "Why, it's a good deal of money."

"No, I mean the honour of it," replied the wife. "Do you think he cares for the money? Those few dollars he can earn a hundred times over, and most likely he'll get a rich wife into the bargain. If we had children of our own, husband, our child should be an architect and a professor too."

George was spoken well of in the cellar, and he was spoken well of in the first floor: the old Count took upon himself to do that.

The pictures he had drawn in his childhood gave the occasion for it. But how did the conversation come to turn on these pictures? Why, they had been talking of Russia and of Moscow, and thus mention was made of the Kremlin, which little George had once drawn for Miss Emily. He had drawn many pictures, but the Count especially remembered one, "Emily's Castle," where she was to sleep, and to dance, and to play at receiving guests.

"The Professor was a true man," said the Count, "and would be a Privy Councillor before he died, it was not at all unlikely; and he might build a real castle for the young lady before that time came: why not?"

"That was a strange jest," remarked the General's lady, when the Count had gone away. The General shook his head thoughtfully, and went out for a ride, with his groom behind him at a proper distance, and he sat more stiffly than ever on his high horse.

It was Emily's birthday. Flowers, books, letters, and visiting cards came pouring in. The General's lady kissed her on the mouth, and the General kissed her on the forehead; they were affectionate parents,

and they and Emily had to receive grand visitors—two of the Princes. They talked of balls and theatres, of diplomatic missions, of the government of empires and nations; and then they spoke of talent, native talent; and so the discourse turned upon the young architect.

"He is building up an immortality for himself," said one; "and he will certainly build his way into one of our first families."

"One of our first families!" repeated the General, and afterwards the General's lady; "what is meant by one of our first families?"

"I know for whom it was intended," said the General's lady; "but I shall not say it. I don't think it. Heaven disposes, but I shall be astonished."

"I am astonished also!" said the General. "I haven't an idea in my head!" And he fell into a reverie, waiting for ideas.

There is a power, a nameless power, in the possession of favour from above, the favour of Providence, and this favour little George had.—But we are forgetting the birthday.

Emily's room was fragrant with flowers, sent by male and female friends; on the table lay beautiful presents for greeting and remembrance, but none could come from George—none could come from him; but it was not necessary, for the whole house was full of remembrances of him. Even out of the ash-bin the blossom of memory peeped forth, for Emily had sat whimpering there on the day when the window-curtain caught fire, and George arrived in the character of first engine. A glance out of the window, and the acacia tree reminded of the days of childhood. Flowers and leaves had fallen, but there stood the tree covered with hoar frost, looking like a single huge branch of coral; and the moon shone clear and large among the twigs, unchanged in its changings, as it was when George divided his bread and butter with little Emily.

Out of a box the girl took the drawings of the Czar's palace and of her own castle—remembrances of George. The drawings were looked at, and many thoughts came. She remembered the day when, unobserved by her father and mother, she had gone down to the porter's wife who lay dying. Once again she seemed to sit beside her, holding the dying woman's hand in hers, hearing the dying woman's last words: "Blessing George!" The mother was thinking of her son; and now Emily gave her own interpretation to those words. Yes, George was certainly with her on her birthday.

It happened that the next day was another birthday in that house—the General's birthday. He had been born the day after his daughter, but before her, of course—many years before her. Many presents

arrived, and among them came a saddle of exquisite workmanship, a comfortable and costly saddle—one of the Princes had just such another. Now, from whom might this saddle come? The General was delighted. There was a little note with the saddle. Now if the words on the note had been "Many thanks for yesterday's reception," we might easily have guessed from whom it came. But the words were "From somebody whom the General does not know."

REMEMBRANCES OF GEORGE.

"Whom in the world do I not know?" exclaimed the General. "I know everybody;" and his thoughts wandered all through society, for he knew everybody there. "That saddle comes from my wife!" he said at last. "She is teasing me—charming!"

But she was not teasing him; those times were past.

Again there was a feast, but it was not in the General's house—it was a fancy ball at the Prince's, and masks were allowed too.

The General went as Rubens, in a Spanish costume, with a little ruff round his neck, a sword by his side, and a stately manner. The

General's lady was Madame Rubens, in black velvet made high round the neck, exceedingly warm, and with a mill-stone round her neck in the shape of a great ruff—accurately dressed after a Dutch picture in the possession of the General, in which the hands were especially admired. They were just like the hands of the General's lady.

Emily was Psyche. In white crape and lace she was like a floating swan. She did not want wings at all. She only wore them as emblematic of Psyche.

Brightness, splendour, light and flowers, wealth and taste appeared at the ball; there was so much to see, that the beautiful hands of Madame Rubens made no sensation at all.

A black domino, with an acacia blossom in his cap, danced with Psyche.

"Who is that?" asked the General's lady.

"His Royal Highness," replied the General. "I am quite sure of it. I knew him directly by the pressure of his hand."

The General's lady doubted it.

General Rubens had no doubts about it. He went up to the black domino and wrote the royal letters in the mask's hand. These were denied, but the mask gave him a hint.

The words that came with the saddle: "One whom you do not know, General."

"But I do know you," said the General. "It was you who sent me the saddle."

The domino raised his hand, and disappeared among the other guests.

"Who is that black domino with whom you were dancing, Emily?" asked the General's lady.

"I did not ask his name," she replied, "because you knew it. It is the Professor. Your *protegé* is here, Count!" she continued, turning to that nobleman, who stood close by. "A black domino with acacia blossoms in his cap."

"Very likely, my dear lady," replied the Count. "But one of the Princes wears just the same costume."

"I knew the pressure of the hand," said the General. "The saddle came from the Prince. I am so certain of it that I could invite that domino to dinner."

"Do so. If it be the Prince he will certainly come," replied the Count.

"And if it is the other he will not come," said the General, and approached the black domino, who was just speaking with the King.

The General gave a very respectful invitation "that they might make each other's acquaintance," and he smiled in his certainty concerning the person he was inviting. He spoke loud and distinctly.

The domino raised his mask, and it was George. "Do you repeat your invitation, General?" he asked.

The General certainly seemed to grow an inch taller, assumed a more stately demeanour, and took two steps backward and one step forward as if he were dancing a minuet, and then came as much gravity and expression into the face of the General as the General could contrive to infuse into it; but he replied,

"I never retract my words! You are invited, Professor!" and he bowed with a glance at the King, who must have heard the whole dialogue.

Now, there was company to dinner at the General's, but only the old Count and his *protegé* were invited.

"I have my foot under his table," thought George: "that's laying the foundation-stone."

And the foundation-stone was really laid, with great ceremony, at the house of the General and of the General's lady.

The man had come, and had spoken quite like a person in good society, and had made himself very agreeable, so that the General had often to repeat his "Charming!" The General talked of this dinner, talked of it even to a Court lady; and this lady, one of the most intellectual persons about the Court, asked to be invited to meet the Professor the next time he should come. So he had to be invited again; and he was invited, and came, and was charming again; he could even play chess.

"He's not out of the cellar," said the General; "he's quite a distinguished person. There are many distinguished persons of that kind, and it's no fault of his."

The Professor, who was received in the King's palace, might very well be received by the General; but that he could ever belong to the house was out of the question, only the whole town was talking of it.

He grew and grew. The dew of favour fell from above, so no one was surprised after all that he should become a Privy Councillor, and Emily a Privy Councillor's lady.

"Life is either a tragedy or a comedy," said the General. "In tragedies they die, in comedies they marry one another."

In this case they married. And they had three clever boys—but not all at once.

The sweet children rode on their hobby-horses through all the rooms when they came to see their grandparents. And the General also rode on his stick; he rode behind them in the character of groom to the little Privy Councillors.

AT THE GENERAL'S.

And the General's lady sat on her sofa and smiled at them, even when she had her severest headache.

So far did George get, and much further; else it had not been worth while to tell the story of THE PORTER'S SON.

PUT OFF IS NOT DONE WITH.

AN old castle stood there, surrounded by its muddy moat, with the drawbridge, which was seldom let down; for not all guests are good people. Under the roof loopholes had been pierced through, which one

could shoot or could pour boiling water, and even melted lead, down upon the enemy, if he should approach too near. It was a long way up, inside the house, to the open ceiling of rafters, which was a very good thing, considering the quantity of smoke that curled up from the great fire on the hearth, where big wet logs were sputtering. On the walls were pictures of men in armour, and of proud women in heavy dresses. The stateliest of all these dames walked about, a living woman; her name was Meta Mogens, and she was the lady of the house, for the castle belonged to her.

THE BOY'S GRATITUDE.

Towards evening robbers came. They slew three of the people, and killed the yard-dog too, and then they chained Lady Meta with the dog-chain to the kennel, while they themselves took their ease in the hall, and drank the good wine and beer out of the cellar.

Lady Meta was fastened up by the dog-chain; she could not even bark.

But, behold! A boy of one of the robbers came creeping up quite silently; for he might not let them observe him, or they would have killed him.

"Lady Meta Mogens!" he said. "Do you remember how my father had to ride the wooden horse * in your lord's time? You entreated for him, but it was no use—he was to ride the wooden horse till his limbs were crippled. But you crept down to him as I am creeping down now to you; you yourself thrust a little stone under each of his feet, so that he had a support. Nobody saw it; or, if any did, they pretended not to see it, for you were the gracious young lady. My father told me this, and I remembered it, and have never forgotten it. And now I will set you free, Lady Meta Mogens."

Then they took horses from the stable, and rode away through the wind and rain, and brought friends to help them.

"That was a rich reward for the little kindness I showed the old man," said Dame Meta Mogens.

"Put off is not Done with," replied the boy.

The robbers were hanged.

HER WORLD ENLARGED.

There was an old chateau, and it is there still. It does not belong to Lady Meta Mogens; it has to do with quite another story of noble folks.

We are in the present time. The sun shines on the gilded pinnacle of the tower; little islands are scattered like bouquets over the water, and the wild swans swim majestically round them. In the garden roses

* An ancient and barbarous military punishment.

THE JOY OF GOOD DEEDS.

are growing; the lady of the house is the most delicate rose-leaf of all. The rose-leaf shines in joy—in the joy of good deeds; but it is not displayed to all the world; it shines in the heart, and what is concealed there is not forgotten. "Put off is not Done with."

Now she goes from the lordly hall to the little farm-house in the fields.

Yonder dwells a poor crippled girl: the window in the little room looks out upon the north, and the sun does not shine in there. The girl can only look out upon a little space of field, which is surrounded by a high fence. But to-day the sun is shining, the warm bountiful sun of the bountiful Creator is in the room; it comes from the south through the new window which has been made where there used to be only wall.

The crippled girl is sitting in the warm sunshine looking out over forest and lake: to her the world has grown so large, so beautiful, and all through a single word of the friendly lady of the chateau.

"The word was so easily spoken, the deed was such a trifling one," said she; "but the joy which it has given me is exceedingly great and full of blessing!"

And thus she does many a good deed, and thinks of all who are in the poor dwellings, and in the rich dwellings when there are sorrowful hearts likewise. It is done in secret and concealed; but the good God does not forget it. "Put off is not Done with."

There stood an old house; it stood in the busy, bustling city. It had rooms and halls; but into those we will not go. We will stay in the kitchen, and there it is warm, clean, and neat. The copper utensils gleam, the table is polished bright, and the sink is as clean as a newly-washed rolling-board. All this has been done by a servant girl, who has yet found time enough to dress herself as if she were going to church. She has a bow in her cap, a black bow, which signifies mourning. But she has no one to mourn, neither father nor mother, relative nor lover; she is a poor girl. Once she was engaged to be married, engaged to a poor lad; they loved each other heartily. One day he came to her and said,

"We both of us have no money. The rich widow yonder has spoken words of affection to me. She will make me rich, but you are in my heart. What do you advise me to do?"

"Do whatever you think will make you happy," said the girl. "Be kind and affectionate to her; but this you must understand: that from the hour when we part we must not meet again."

And years went by. Then one day her friend and betrothed of old times met her in the street. He looked ill and miserable, and then she could not help speaking to him, and asked him,

"How goes it with you?"

"I am rich and well off in every way," he said. "My wife is honest and good; but you are in my heart. I have fought my battle, and it will soon be over. We shall meet no more till we are both with God."

And a week has gone by. And this morning it was announced in the papers that he was dead; and therefore the girl is in mourning. Her betrothed is dead, and has left behind him a wife and three step-children, the paper says. This sounds as if there were something wrong, and yet the metal is good.

THE MOURNING BOW.

The black bow signifies mourning, and the girl's face signifies mourning much more; but the mourning is hidden in her heart, and will never be forgotten. "Put off is not Done with."

You see, here were three stories—three leaves on one stalk. Do you want some more such shamrock-leaves? In the book of the heart there are many such, for "Put off is not Done with."

THE SNOWDROP.

It was winter-time; the air was cold, the wind was sharp; but within the closed doors it was warm and comfortable, and within the closed door lay the flower; it lay in the bulb under the snow-covered earth.

One day rain fell. The drops penetrated through the snowy covering down into the earth, and touched the flower-bulb, and talked of the bright world above. Soon the Sunbeam pierced its way through the snow to the root, and within the root there was a stirring.

"Come in," said the Flower.

"I cannot," said the Sunbeam. "I am not strong enough to unlock the door! When the summer comes I shall be strong!"

"When will it be summer?" asked the Flower, and she repeated this question each time a new sunbeam made its way down to her. But the summer was yet far distant. The snow still lay upon the ground, and there was a coat of ice on the water every night.

"What a long time it takes! what a long times it takes!" said the Flower. "I feel a stirring and striving within me; I must stretch myself, I must unlock the door, I must get out, and must nod a good morning to the summer, and what a happy time that will be!"

And the Flower stirred and stretched itself within the thin rind which the water had softened from without, and the snow and the earth had warmed, and the Sunbeam had knocked at; and it shot forth under the snow with a greenish-white blossom on a green stalk, with narrow thick leaves, which seemed to want to protect it. The snow was cold, but was pierced by the Sunbeam; therefore it was easy to get through it; and now the Sunbeam came with greater strength than before.

"Welcome, welcome!" sang and sounded every ray; and the Flower lifted itself up over the snow into the brighter world. The Sunbeams caressed and kissed it, so that it opened altogether, white as snow, and ornamented with green stripes. It bent its head in joy and humility.

"Beautiful Flower!" said the Sunbeams, "how graceful and delicate you are! You are the first, you are the only one! You are our love! You are the bell that rings out for summer, beautiful summer, over country and town. All the snow will melt; the cold winds will be driven away; we shall rule; all will become green, and then you will

have companions—syringas, laburnums, and roses; but you are the first, so graceful, so delicate!"

That was a great pleasure. It seemed as if the air were singing and sounding, as if rays of light were piercing through the leaves and the stalks of the Flower. There it stood, so delicate, and so easily broken, and yet so strong in its young beauty: it stood there in its white dress with the green stripes, and made a summer. But there was a long time yet to the summer-time. Clouds hid the sun, and bleak winds were blowing.

"You have come too early," said Wind and Weather. "We have still the power, and you shall feel it, and give it up to us. You should have stayed quietly at home, and not have run out to make a display of yourself. Your time is not come yet!"

It was a cutting cold! The days which now come brought not a single sunbeam. It was weather that might break such a little Flower in two with cold. But the Flower had more strength than she herself knew of: she was strong in joy and in faith in the summer, which would be sure to come, which had been announced by her deep longing and confirmed by the warm sunlight; and so she remained standing in confidence in the snow in her white garment, bending her head even while the snow-flakes fell thick and heavy, and the icy winds swept over her.

"You'll break!" they said, "and fade, and fade! What did you want out here? Why did you let yourself be tempted? The Sunbeam only made game of you. Now you have what you deserve, you summer gauk."*

"Summer gauk!" she repeated in the cold morning hour.

"O summer gauk!" cried some children rejoicingly; "yonder stands one—how beautiful, how beautiful! The first one, the only one!"

These words did the Flower so much good, they seemed to her like warm sunbeams. In her joy the Flower did not even feel when it was broken off. It lay in a child's hand, and was kissed by a child's mouth, and carried into a warm room, and looked on by gentle eyes, and put into water. How strengthening, how invigorating! The Flower thought she had suddenly come upon the summer.

The daughter of the house, a beautiful little girl, was confirmed, and she had a friend who was confirmed too. He was studying for an examination for an appointment. "He shall be my summer gauk," she said; and she took the delicate Flower and laid it in a piece of scented

* The Danish name for the snowdrop signifies "summer gauk" or "summer fool;" "gauk" also means "cuckoo." The German *gauch* and the English *gauk*, as seen in *Gutz-gauch*, the cuckoo, and *Gawthorpe*, have the same origin. "A notorious gull and geck."—*Shakespeare.*

paper, on which verses were written, beginning with summer gauk and ending with summer gauk. "My friend, be a winter gauk." She had twitted him with the summer. Yes, all this was in the verses, and the paper was folded up like a letter, and the Flower was folded in the letter too. It was dark around her, dark as in those days when she lay hidden in the bulb. The Flower went forth on her journey, and lay in the post-bag, and was pressed and crushed, which was not at all pleasant; but that soon came to an end.

SPRING'S FLOWER.

The journey was over: the letter was opened, and read by the dear friend. How pleased he was! He kissed the letter, and it was laid, with its enclosure of verses, in a box, in which there were many beautiful verses, but all of them without flowers: she was the first, the only one, as the Sunbeams had called her; and it was a pleasant thing to think of that.

She had time enough, moreover, to think about it: she thought of it while the summer passed away, and the long winter went by, and the summer came again, before she appeared once more. But now the young man was not pleased at all: he took hold of the letter very

roughly, and threw the verses away, so that the Flower fell on the ground. Flat and faded she certainly was, but why should she be thrown on the ground? still, it was better to be here than in the fire, where the verses and the paper were being burnt to ashes. What had happened? What happens so often:—the Flower had made a gauk of him, that was a jest; the girl had made a fool of him, that was no jest; she had, during the summer, chosen another friend.

RESTORED TO THE POETS.

Next morning the sun shone in upon the little flattened Snowdrop, that looked as if it had been painted upon the floor. The servant girl, who was sweeping out the room, picked it up, and laid it in one of the books which were upon the table, in the belief that it must have fallen out while the room was being arranged. Again the Flower lay among verses—printed verses—and they are better than written ones—at least, more money has been spent upon them.

And after this years went by: the book stood upon the book-shelf, and then it was taken up and somebody read out of it. It was a good book: verses and songs by the old Danish poet Ambrosius Stub, which

are well worth reading. The man who was now reading the book turned over a page.

"Why, there's a flower!" he said; "a snowdrop, a summer gauk, a poet gauk! That flower must have been put in there with a meaning! Poor Ambrosius Stub! he was a summer fool too, a poet fool: he came too early, before his time, and therefore he had to taste the sharp winds, and wander about as a guest from one noble landed proprietor to another, like a flower in a glass of water, a flower in rhymed verses! Summer fool, winter fool, fun and folly—but the first, the only, the fresh young Danish poet of those days. Yes, thou shalt remain as a token in the book, thou little snowdrop: thou hast been put there with a meaning."

And so the Snowdrop was put back into the book, and felt equally honoured and pleased to know that it was a token in the glorious book of songs, and that he who was the first to sing and to write had been also a snowdrop, had been a summer gauk, and had been looked upon in the winter-time as a fool. The Flower understood this, in her way, as we interpret everything in *our* way.

That is the story of the Snowdrop.

OUR AUNT.

You ought to have known our aunt: she was charming! That is to say, she was not charming at all as the word is usually understood; but she was good and kind, amusing in her way, and was just as any one ought to be whom people are to talk about and to laugh at. She might have been put into a play, and wholly and solely on account of the fact that she only lived for the theatre, and for what was done there. She was an honourable matron; but Agent Fabs, whom she used to call "Flabs," declared that our aunt was stage-struck.

"The theatre is my school," said she, "the source of my knowledge. From thence I have my resuscitated biblical history. Now, 'Moses' and 'Joseph in Egypt'—there are operas for you! I get my universal history from the theatre, my geography, and my knowledge of men. Out of

the French pieces I get to know life in Paris—slippery, but exceedingly interesting. How I have cried over 'La Famille Roquebourg'—that the man must drink himself to death, so that she may marry the young fellow! Yes, how many tears I have wept in the fifty years I have subscribed to the theatre!"

OUR AUNT IN HER GLORY.

Our aunt knew every acting play, every bit of scenery, every character, every one who appeared or had appeared. She seemed really only to live during the nine months the theatre was open. Summer-time without a summer theatre seemed to be only a time that made her old; while, on the other hand, a theatrical evening that lasted till midnight was a lengthening of her life. She did not say, as other people do, "Now we shall have spring, the stork is here," or, "They 've advertised the first strawberries in the papers;" she, on the contrary, used to announce the coming of autumn with "Have you heard they 're selling boxes for the theatre? now the performances will begin."

She used to value a lodging entirely according to its proximity to the theatre. It was a real sorrow to her when she had to leave the little lane behind the playhouse, and move into the great street that lay a little farther off, and live there in a house where she had no opposite neighbours.

"At home," said she, "my windows must be my opera-box. One cannot sit and look into one's self till one 's tired; one must see people. But

now I live just as if I 'd gone into the country. If I want to see human beings, I must go into my kitchen, and sit down on the sink, for there only I have opposite neighbours. No; when I lived in my dear little lane, I could look straight down into the ironmonger's shop, and had only three hundred paces to the theatre; and now I 've three thousand paces to go, military measurement."

Our aunt was sometimes ill; but however unwell she might feel, she never missed the play. The doctor prescribed one day that she should put her feet in a bran bath, and she followed his advice; but she drove to the theatre all the same, and sat with her feet in bran there. If she had died there, she would have been very glad. Thorwaldsen died in the theatre, and she called that a happy death.

She could not imagine but that in heaven there must be a theatre too: it had not, indeed, been promised us, but we might very well imagine it. The many distinguished actors and actresses who had passed away must surely have a field for their talent.

Our aunt had an electric wire from the theatre to her room. A telegram used to be dispatched to her at coffee-time, and it used to consist of the words "Herr Sivertsen is at the machinery;" for it was he who gave the signal for drawing the curtain up and down and for changing the scenes.

From him she used to receive a short and concise description of every piece. His opinion of Shakspeare's "Tempest" was "Mad nonsense! There 's so much to put up, and the first scene begins with 'Water to the front of wings.'" That is to say, the water had to come forward so far. But when, on the other hand, the same interior scene remained through five acts, he used to pronounce it a sensible, well-written play, a resting play, which performed itself, without putting up scenes.

In earlier times, by which name our aunt used to designate thirty years ago, she and the before-mentioned Herr Sivertsen had been younger. At that time he had already been connected with the machinery, and was, as she said, her benefactor. It used to be the custom in those days that in the evening performances in the only theatre the town possessed, spectators were admitted to the part called the "flies," over the stage, and every machinist had one or two places to give away. Often the flies were quite full of good company; it was said that generals' wives and privy councillors' wives had been up there. It was too interesting to look down behind the scenes, and to see how the people walked to and fro on the stage when the curtain was down.

Our aunt had been there several times, as well when there was a tragedy as when there was a ballet; for the pieces in which there were the

greatest number of characters on the stage were the most interesting to see from the flies. One sat pretty much in the dark up there, and most people took their supper up with them. Once three apples and a great bit of bread and butter and sausage fell down right into the dungeon of Ugolino, where that unhappy man was to be starved to death; and there was great laughter among the audience. The sausage was one of the weightiest reasons why the worthy management refused in future to have any spectators up in the flies.

"But I was there seven and thirty times," said our aunt, "and I shall always remember Mr. Sivertsen for that."

On the very last evening when the flies were still open to the public the "Judgment of Solomon" was performed, as our aunt remembered very well. She had, through the influence of her benefactor, Herr Sivertsen, procured a free admission for the Agent Fabs, although he did not deserve it in the least; for he was always cutting his jokes about the theatre and teasing our aunt; but she had procured him a free admission to the flies for all that. He wanted to look at this player-stuff from the other side.

"Those were his own words, and they were just like him," said our aunt.

He looked down from above, on the "Judgment of Solomon," and fell asleep over it: one would have thought he had come from a dinner where many toasts were given. He went to sleep, and was locked in; and there he sat through the dark night in the flies, and when he woke he told a story, but our aunt would not believe it.

"The 'Judgment of Solomon' was over," he said, "and all the people had gone away, upstairs and downstairs; but now the real play began, the after-piece, which was the best of all," said the agent. "Then life came into the affair. It was not the 'Judgment of Solomon' that was performed; no, a real court of judgment was held upon the stage." And Agent Fabs had the impudence to try and make our aunt believe all this: that was the thanks she got for having got him a place in the flies.

What did the agent say? Why, it was curious enough to hear, but there was malice and satire in it.

"It looked dark enough up there," said the agent; "but then the magic business began—a great performance, 'The Judgment in the Theatre.' The box-keepers were at their posts, and every spectator had to show his ghostly pass-book, that it might be decided if he was to be admitted with hands loose or bound, and with or without a muzzle. Grand people who came too late, when the performance had begun, and

young people, who could not always watch the time, were tied up outside, and had list slippers put on their feet, with which they were allowed to go in before the beginning of the next act, and they had muzzles too. And then the 'Judgment on the Stage' began."

"All malice, and not a bit of truth in it," said our aunt.

The painter, who wanted to get to Paradise, had to go up a staircase which he had himself painted, but which no man could mount: that was to expiate his sins against perspective. All the plants and buildings, which the property-man had placed, with infinite pains, in countries to which they did not belong, the poor fellow was obliged to put in their right places before cockcrow, if *he* wanted to get into Paradise. Let Herr Fabs see how he would get in himself; but what he said of the performers, tragedians and comedians, singers and dancers, that was the most rascally of all. Mr. Fabs, indeed!—Flabs! He did not deserve to be admitted at all, and our aunt would not soil her lips with what he said. And he said, did Flabs, that the whole was written down, and it should be printed when he was dead and buried, but not before, for he would not risk having his arms and legs broken.

Once our aunt had been in fear and trembling in her temple of happiness, the theatre. It was on a winter day, one of those days in which one has a couple of hours of daylight, with a grey sky. It was terribly cold and snowy, but aunt must go to the theatre. A little opera and a great ballet were performed, and a prologue and an epilogue into the bargain; and that would last till late at night. Our aunt must needs go; so she borrowed a pair of fur boots of her lodger, boots with fur inside and out, and which reached far up her legs.

She got to the theatre, and to her box; the boots were warm, and she kept them on. Suddenly there was a cry of "Fire!" smoke was coming from one of the side scenes, and streamed down from the flies, and there was a terrible panic. The people came rushing out, and our aunt was the last in the box, "on the second tier, left-hand side, for from there the scenery looks best," she used to say: "the scenes are always so arranged that they look best from the King's side." Aunt wanted to come out, but the people before her, in their fright and heedlessness, slammed the door of the box; and there sat our aunt, and couldn't get out, and couldn't get in; that is to say, she couldn't get into the next box, for the partition was too high for her. She called out, and no one heard her; she looked down into the tier of boxes below her, and it was empty, and low, and looked quite near, and aunt in her terror felt quite young and light. She thought of jumping down, and had got one leg over the partition, the other resting on the bench. There she sat astride,

as if on horseback, well wrapped up in her flowered cloak, with one leg hanging out — a leg in a tremendous fur boot. That was a sight to behold; and when it was beheld, our aunt was heard too, and was saved from burning, for the theatre was not burned down.

That was the most memorable evening of her life, and she was glad that she could not see herself, for she would have died with confusion.

Her benefactor in the machinery department, Herr Sivertsen, visited her every Sunday, but it was a long time from Sunday to Sunday. In the latter time, therefore, she used to have in a little child "for the scraps;" that is to say, to eat up the remains of the dinner. It was

THE BALLET GIRL.

a child employed in the ballet, one that certainly wanted feeding. The little one used to appear, sometimes as an elf, sometimes as a page; the most difficult part she had to play was the lion's hind leg in the "Magic Flute;" but as she grew larger she could represent the fore-feet of the lion. She certainly only got half a guilder for that, whereas the hind legs were paid for with a whole guilder; but then she had to walk bent, and to do without fresh air. "That was all very interesting to hear," said our aunt.

She deserved to live as long as the theatre stood, but she could not

last so long; and she did not die in the theatre, but respectably in her bed. Her last words were, moreover, not without meaning. She asked,

"What will the play be to-morrow?"

At her death she left about five hundred dollars. We presume this from the interest, which came to twenty dollars. This our aunt had destined as a legacy for a worthy old spinster who had no friends; it was to be devoted to a yearly subscription for a place in the second tier, on the left side, for the Saturday evening, "for on that evening two pieces were always given," it said in the will; and the only condition laid upon the person who enjoyed the legacy was, that she should think, every Saturday evening, of our aunt, who was lying in her grave.

This was our aunt's religion.

THE THISTLE'S EXPERIENCES.

Belonging to the lordly manor house was a beautiful well-kept garden, with rare trees and flowers; the guests of the proprietor declared their admiration of it: the people of the neighbourhood, from town and country, came on Sundays and holidays, and asked permission to see the garden; indeed, whole schools used to pay visits to it.

Outside the garden, by the palings at the road-side, stood a great mighty Thistle, which spread out in many directions from the root, so that it might have been called a thistle bush. Nobody looked at it, except the old Ass which drew the milk-maid's cart. This Ass used to stretch out his neck towards the Thistle, and say, "You are beautiful; I should like to eat you!" But his halter was not long enough to let him reach it and eat it.

There was great company at the manor house—some very noble people from the capital; young pretty girls; and among them a young lady who came from a long distance. She had come from Scotland, and was of high birth, and was rich in land and in gold—a bride worth winning, said more than one of the young gentlemen; and their lady mothers said the same thing.

The young people amused themselves on the lawn, and played at ball;

they wandered among the flowers, and each of the young girls broke off a flower, and fastened it in a young gentleman's button-hole. But the young Scotch lady looked round, for a long time, in an undecided way. None of the flowers seemed to suit her taste. Then her eye glanced across the paling—outside stood the great thistle bush, with the reddish-blue, sturdy flowers: she saw them, she smiled, and asked the son of the house to pluck one for her.

"It is the flower of Scotland," she said. "It blooms in the scutcheon of my country. Give me yonder flower."

And he brought the fairest blossom, and pricked his fingers as completely as if it had grown on the sharpest rose bush.

She placed the thistle-flower in the button-hole of the young man, and he felt himself highly honoured. Each of the other young gentlemen would willingly have given his own beautiful flower to have worn this one, presented by the fair hand of the Scottish maiden. And if the son of the house felt himself honoured, what were the feelings of the Thistle bush? It seemed to him as if dew and sunshine were streaming through him.

"I am something more than I knew of," said the Thistle to itself. "I suppose my right place is really inside the palings, and not outside. One is often strangely placed in this world; but now I have at least managed to get one of my people within the pale, and indeed into a button-hole!"

The Thistle told this event to every blossom that unfolded itself; and not many days had gone by before the Thistle heard, not from men, not from the twittering of the birds, but from the air itself, which stores up the sounds, and carries them far around—out of the most retired walks of the garden, and out of the rooms of the house, in which doors and windows stood open, that the young gentleman who had received the thistle-flower from the hand of the fair Scottish maiden had also now received the heart and hand of the lady in question. They were a handsome pair—it was a good match.

"That match *I* made up!" said the Thistle; and he thought of the flower he had given for the button-hole. Every flower that opened heard of this occurrence.

"I shall certainly be transplanted into the garden," thought the Thistle, "and perhaps put into a pot, which crowds one in: that is said to be the greatest of all honours."

And the Thistle pictured this to himself in such a lively manner, that at last he said, with full conviction, "I am to be transplanted into a pot."

Then he promised every little thistle-flower which unfolded itself

that it also should be put into a pot, and perhaps into a button-hole, the highest honour that could be attained. But not one of them was put into a pot, much less into a button-hole. They drank in the sunlight and the air; lived on the sunlight by day, and on the dew by night; bloomed —were visited by bees and hornets, who looked after the honey, the dowry of the flower, and they took the honey, and left the flower where it was.

"The thievish rabble!" said the Thistle. "If I could only stab every one of them! But I cannot"

The flowers hung their heads and faded; but after a time new ones came.

THE ASS AND THE THISTLE.

"You come in good time," said the Thistle. "I am expecting every moment to get across the fence."

A few innocent daisies, and a long thin dandelion, stood and listened in deep admiration, and believed everything they heard.

The old Ass of the milk-cart stood at the edge of the field-road, and glanced across at the blooming Thistle bush; but his halter was too short, and he could not reach it.

And the Thistle thought so long of the thistle of Scotland, to whose family he said he belonged, that he fancied at last that he had come from Scotland, and that his parents had been put into the national escutcheon. That was a great thought; but, you see, a great thistle has a right to a great thought.

"One is often of so grand a family, that one may not know it," said the Nettle, who grew close by. He had a kind of idea that he might be made into cambric if he were rightly treated.

And the summer went by, and the autumn went by. The leaves fell from the trees, and the few flowers left had deeper colours and less scent. The gardener's boy sang in the garden, across the palings:

"Up the hill, down the dale we wend.
That is life, from beginning to end."

The young fir trees in the forest began to long for Christmas, but it was a long time to Christmas yet.

"Here I am standing yet!" said the Thistle. "It is as if nobody thought of me, and yet I managed the match. They were betrothed, and they have had their wedding; it is now a week ago. I won't take a single step—because I can't."

A few more weeks went by. The Thistle stood there with his last single flower large and full. This flower had shot up from near the roots; the wind blew cold over it, the colours vanished, and the flower grew in size, and looked like a silvered sunflower.

One day the young pair, now man and wife, came into the garden. They went along by the paling, and the young wife looked across it.

"There 's the great thistle still growing," she said. "It has no flowers now."

"Oh, yes, the ghost of the last one is there still," said he. And he pointed to the silvery remains of the flower, which looked like a flower themselves.

"It is pretty, certainly," she said. "Such an one must be carved on the frame of our picture."

And the young man had to climb across the palings again, and to break off the calyx of the thistle. It pricked his fingers, but then he had called it a ghost. And this thistle-calyx came into the garden, and into the house, and into the drawing-room. There stood a picture—"The Young Couple." A thistle-flower was painted in the button-hole of the bridegroom. They spoke about this, and also about the thistle-flower they brought, the last thistle-flower, now gleaming like silver, whose picture was carved on the frame.

And the breeze carried what was spoken away, far away.

"What one can experience!" said the Thistle bush. "My first-born was put into a button-hole, and my youngest has been put in a frame. Where shall *I* go?"

And the Ass stood by the road-side, and looked across at the Thistle.

"Come to me, my nibble darling!" said he. "I can't get across to you."

But the Thistle did not answer. He became more and more thoughtful —kept on thinking and thinking till near Christmas, and then a flower of thought came forth.

"If the children are only good, the parents do not mind standing outside the garden pale."

"That 's an honourable thought," said the Sunbeam. "You shall also have a good place."

"In a pot or in a frame?" asked the Thistle.

"In a story," replied the Sunbeam.

POULTRY MEG'S FAMILY.

Poultry Meg was the only person who lived in the new stately dwelling that had been built for the fowls and ducks belonging to the manor house. It stood there where once the old knightly building had stood with its tower, its pointed gables, its moat, and its drawbridge. Close by it was a wilderness of trees and thicket; here the garden had been, and had stretched out to a great lake, which was now moorland. Crows and choughs flew screaming over the old trees, and there were crowds of birds; they did not seem to get fewer when any one shot among them, but seemed rather to increase. One heard the screaming into the poultry-house, where Poultry Meg sat with the ducklings running to and fro over her wooden shoes. She knew every fowl and every duck from the moment it crept out of the shell; and she was fond of her fowls and her ducks, and proud of the stately house that had been built for them. Her own little room in the house was clean and neat, for that was the wish of the gracious lady to whom the house belonged. She often came in the company of grand noble guests, to whom she showed "the hens' and ducks' barracks," as she called the little house.

Here were a clothes cupboard, and an arm-chair, and even a chest of drawers; and on these drawers a polished metal plate had been placed,

whereon was engraved the word "Grubbe," and this was the name of the noble family that had lived in the house of old. The brass plate had been found when they were digging the foundation; and the clerk had said it had no value except in being an old relic. The clerk knew all

MEG AT HOME.

about the place, and about the old times, for he had his knowledge from books, and many a memorandum had been written and put in his table-drawer. But the oldest of the crows perhaps knew more than he, and screamed it out in her own language—but that was the crow's language, and the clerk did not understand that, clever as he was.

After the hot summer days the mist sometimes hung over the moor-land as if a whole lake were behind the old trees, among which the crows and the daws were fluttering; and thus it had looked when the good Knight Grubbe had lived here—when the old manor house stood with its thick red walls. The dog-chain used to reach in those days quite over the gateway; through the tower one went into a paved passage which led to the rooms; the windows were narrow, and the panes were small, even in the great hall where the dancing used to be; but in the time of the last Grubbe there had been no dancing in the hall within the

memory of man, although an old drum still lay there that had served as part of the music. Here stood a quaintly carved cupboard, in which rare flower-roots were kept, for my Lady Grubbe was fond of plants and cultivated trees and shrubs. Her husband preferred riding out to shoot wolves and boars; and his little daughter Marie always went with him part of the way. When she was only five years old, she would sit proudly on her horse, and look saucily round with her great black eyes. It was a great amusement to her to hit out among the hunting-dogs with her whip; but her father would rather have seen her hit among the peasant boys, who came running up to stare at their lord.

The peasant in the clay hut close by the knightly house had a son named Sören, of the same age as the gracious little lady. The boy could climb well, and had always to bring her down the birds' nests. The birds screamed as loud as they could, and one of the greatest of them hacked him with its beak over the eye so that the blood ran down, and it was at first thought the eye had been destroyed; but it had not been injured after all. Marie Grubbe used to call him *her* Sören, and that was a great favour, and was an advantage to Sören's father—poor Jon, who had one day committed a fault, and was to be punished by riding on the wooden horse. This same horse stood in the courtyard, and had four poles for legs, and a single narrow plank for a back; on this Jon had to ride astride, and some heavy bricks were fastened to his feet into the bargain, that he might not sit too comfortably. He made horrible grimaces, and Sören wept and implored little Marie to interfere. She immediately ordered that Sören's father should be taken down, and when they did not obey her, she stamped on the floor, and pulled at her father's sleeve till it was torn to pieces. She would have her way, and she got her way, and Sören's father was taken down.

Lady Grubbe, who now came up, parted her little daughter's hair from the child's brow, and looked at her affectionately; but Marie did not understand why.

She wanted to go to the hounds, and not to her mother, who went down into the garden, to the lake where the water-lily bloomed, and the heads of bulrushes nodded amid the reeds; and she looked at all this beauty and freshness. "How pleasant!" she said. In the garden stood at that time a rare tree, which she herself had planted: it was called the blood-beech—a kind of negro among the other trees, so dark brown were the leaves. This tree required much sunshine, for in continual shade it would become bright green like the other trees, and thus would lose its distinctive character. In the lofty chestnut trees were many birds' nests, and also in the thickets and in the grassy meadows. It

LADY GRUBBE'S REPROOF.

seemed as though the birds knew that they were protected here, and that no one must fire a gun at them.

Little Marie came here with Sören. He knew how to climb, as we have already said, and eggs and fluffy-feathered young birds were brought down. The birds, great and small, flew about in terror and tribulation; the peewit from the fields, and the crows and daws from the high trees

screamed and screamed; it was just such a din as the family will raise to the present day.

"What are you doing, you children?" cried the gentle lady: "that is sinful!"

Sören stood abashed, and even the little gracious lady looked down a little; but then she said, quite short and pretty,

"My father lets me do it!"

"Craw—craw! away—away from here!" cried the great black birds, and they flew away; but on the following day they came back, for they were at home here.

The quiet gentle lady did not remain long at home here on earth, for the good God called her away; and, indeed, her home was rather with Him than in the knightly house; and the church bells tolled solemnly when her corpse was carried to the church, and the eyes of the poor people were wet with tears, for she had been good to them.

When she was gone, no one attended to her plantations, and the garden ran to waste. Grubbe the knight was a hard man, they said; but his daughter, young as she was, knew how to manage him: he used to laugh and let her have her way. She was now twelve years old, and strongly built: she looked the people through and through with her black eyes, rode her horse as bravely as a man, and could fire off her gun like a practised hunter.

One day there were great visitors in the neighbourhood, the grandest visitors who could come: the young King, and his half-brother and comrade, the Lord Ulric Frederick Gyldenlöwe. They wanted to hunt the wild boar, and to pass a few days at the castle of Grubbe.

Gyldenlöwe sat at table next to Marie Grubbe, and he took her by the hand and gave her a kiss, as if she had been a relation; but she gave him a box on the ear, and told him she could not bear him, at which there was great laughter, as if that had been a very amusing thing.

And perhaps it was very amusing, for, five years afterwards, when Marie had fulfilled her seventeenth year, a messenger arrived with a letter, in which Lord Gyldenlöwe proposed for the hand of the noble young lady. There was a thing for you!

"He is the grandest and most gallant gentleman in the whole country," said Grubbe the knight; "that is not a thing to despise."

"I don't care so very much about him," said Marie Grubbe; but she did not despise the grandest man of all the country, who sat by the King's side.

Silver plate, and fine linen and woollen, went off to Copenhagen in a ship, while the bride made the journey by land in ten days. But the

outfit met with contrary winds, or with no winds at all, for four months passed before it arrived; and when it came, my Lady Gyldenlöwe was gone.

"I 'd rather lie on coarse sacking than lie in his silken beds," she declared. "I 'd rather walk barefoot than drive with him in a coach!"

Late one evening in November two women came riding into the town of Aarhuus. They were the gracious Lady Gyldenlöwe (Marie Grubbe) and her maid. They came from the town of Weile, whither they had come in a ship from Copenhagen. They stopped at Lord Grubbe's stone mansion in Aarhuus. Grubbe was not well pleased with this visit. Marie was accosted in hard words; but she had a bed-room given her, and got her beer soup of a morning; but the evil part of her father's nature was aroused against her, and she was not used to that. She was not of a gentle temper, and we often answer as we are addressed. She answered openly, and spoke with bitterness and hatred of her husband, with whom she declared she would not live; she was too honourable for that.

A year went by, but it did not go by pleasantly. There were evil words between the father and the daughter, and that ought never to be. Bad words bear bad fruit. What could be the end of such a state of things?

"We two cannot live under the same roof," said the father one day. "Go away from here to our old manor house; but you had better bite your tongue off than spread any lies among the people."

And so the two parted. She went with her maid to the old castle where she had been born, and near which the gentle pious lady, her mother, was lying in the church vault; an old cowherd lived in the courtyard, and was the only other inhabitant of the place. In the rooms black heavy cobwebs hung down, covered with dust; in the garden everything grew just as it would; hops and climbing plants ran like a net between the trees and bushes, and the hemlock and nettle grew larger and stronger. The blood-beech had been outgrown by other trees, and now stood in the shade; and its leaves were green like those of the common trees, and its glory had departed. Crows and choughs, in great close masses, flew past over the tall chestnut trees, and chattered and screamed as if they had something very important to tell one another—as if they were saying, "Now she 's come back again, the little girl who had had their eggs and their young ones stolen from them;" and as for the thief who had got them down, he had to climb up a leafless tree, for he sat on a tall ship's mast, and was beaten with a rope's end if he did not behave himself.

The clerk told all this in our own times; he had collected it and looked it up in books and memoranda. It was to be found, with many other writings, locked up in his table-drawer.

"Upwards and downwards is the course of the world," said he: "it is strange to hear."

And we will hear how it went with Marie Grubbe. We need not for that forget Poultry Meg, who is sitting in her capital hen-house, in our own time. Marie Grubbe sat down in her time, but not with the same spirit that old Poultry Meg showed.

The winter passed away, and the spring and the summer passed away, and then the autumn came again, with the damp, cold sea-fog. It was a lonely desolate life in the old manor house. Marie Grubbe took her gun in her hand, and went out on to the heath, and shot hares and foxes, and shot whatever birds she could hit. More than once she met the noble Sir Palle Dyre, of Nörrebäk, who was also wandering about with his gun and his dogs. He was tall and strong, and boasted of this when they talked together. He could have measured himself against the deceased Mr. Brockenhuus, of Egeskov, of whom the people still talked. Palle Dyre had, after the example of Brockenhuus, caused an iron chain with a hunting-horn to be hung in his gateway; and when he came riding home, he used to seize the chain, and lift himself and his horse from the ground, and blow the horn.

"Come yourself, and see me do that, Dame Marie," he said. "One can breathe fresh and free at Nörrebäk."

When she went to his castle is not known, but on the altar candlesticks in the church of Nörrebäk it was inscribed that they were the gift of Palle Dyre and Marie Grubbe, of Nörrebäk Castle.

A great stout man was Palle Dyre. He drank like a sponge: he was like a tub that could never get full; he snored like a whole stye of pigs, and he looked red and bloated.

"He is treacherous and malicious," said Dame Palle Dyre, Grubbe's daughter. Soon she was weary of her life with him, but that did not make it better.

One day the table was spread, and the dishes grew cold. Palle Dyre was out hunting foxes, and the gracious lady was nowhere to be found. Towards midnight Palle Dyre came home, but Dame Dyre came neither at midnight nor next morning: she had turned her back upon Nörrebäk, and had ridden away without saying good bye.

It was grey, wet weather; the wind blew cold, and a flight of black screaming birds flew over her head—they were not so homeless as she.

First she journeyed southwards, quite down into the German land.

A couple of golden rings with costly stones were turned into money; and then she turned to the east, and then she turned again and went towards the west. She had no food before her eyes, and murmured against everything, even against the good God Himself, so wretched was her soul. Soon her body became wretched too, and she was scarcely able to move a foot. The peewit flew up as she stumbled over the mound of earth where it had built its nest. The bird cried, as it always

EXHAUSTED.

cries, "You thief! you thief!" She had never stolen her neighbour's goods; but as a little girl she had caused eggs and young birds to be taken from the trees, and she thought of that now.

From where she lay she could see the sand-dunes. By the sea-shore lived fishermen; but she could not get so far, she was so ill. The great white sea-mews flew over her head, and screamed as the crows and daws screamed at home in the garden of the manor house. The birds flew quite close to her, and at last it seemed to her as if they became black as crows, and then all was night before her eyes.

When she opened her eyes again, she was being lifted and carried. A great strong man had taken her up in his arms, and she was looking straight into his bearded face. He had a scar over one eye, which seemed to divide the eyebrow into two parts. Weak as she was, he carried her to the ship, where he got a rating for it from the captain.

The next day the ship sailed away. Madame Grubbe had not been

put ashore, so she sailed away with it. But she will return, will she not? Yes, but where, and when?

The clerk could tell about this too, and it was not a story which he patched together himself. He had the whole strange history out of an old authentic book, which we ourselves can take out and read. The Danish historian, Ludwig Holberg, who has written so many useful books and the merry comedies, from which we can get such a good idea of his times and their people, tells in his letters of Marie Grubbe, where and how he met her. It is well worth hearing; but for all that we don't at all forget Poultry Meg, who is sitting cheerful and comfortable in the charming fowl-house.

The ship sailed away with Marie Grubbe. That 's where we left off.

Long years went by.

The plague was raging at Copenhagen; it was in the year 1711. The Queen of Denmark went away to her German home, the King quitted the capital, and everybody who could do so, hurried away. The students, even those who had board and lodging gratis, left the city. One of these students, the last who had remained in the free college, at last went away too. It was two o'clock in the morning. He was carrying his knapsack, which was better stocked with books and writings than with clothes. A damp mist hung over the town, not a person was to be seen in the streets; the street-doors around were marked with crosses, as a sign that the plague was within, or that all the inmates were dead. A great waggon rattled past him; the coachman brandished his whip, and the horses flew by at a gallop: the waggon was filled with corpses. The young student kept his hand before his face, and smelt at some strong spirits that he had with him on a sponge in a little brass scent-case. Out of a small tavern in one of the streets there were sounds of singing and of unhallowed laughter, from people who drank the night through to forget that the plague was at their doors, and that they might be put into the waggon like the others had been. The student turned his steps towards the canal at the castle bridge, where a couple of small ships were lying; one of these was weighing anchor to get away from the plague-stricken city.

"If God spares our lives and grants us a fair wind, we are going to Grönmud, near Falster," said the captain; and he asked the name of the student who wished to go with him.

"Ludwig Holberg," answered the student; and the name sounded like any other; but now there sounds in it one of the proudest names of Denmark; then it was the name of a young, unknown student.

The ship glided past the castle. It was not yet bright day when it

was in the open sea. A light wind filled the sails, and the young student sat down with his face turned towards the fresh wind, and went to sleep, which was not exactly the most prudent thing he could have done.

Already on the third day the ship lay by the island of Falster.

"Do you know any one here with whom I could lodge cheaply?" Holberg asked the captain.

"I should think you would do well to go to the ferry-woman in Borrchaus," answered the captain. "If you want to be very civil to her, her name is Mother Sören Sörensen Müller. But it may happen that she may fly into a fury if you are too polite to her. The man is in custody for a crime, and that 's why she manages the ferry-boat herself—she has fists of her own."

The student took his knapsack and betook himself to the ferry-house. The house door was not locked—it opened, and he went into a room with a brick floor, where a bench, with a great coverlet of leather, formed the chief article of furniture. A white hen, who had a brood of chickens, was fastened to the bench, and had overturned the pipkin of water, so that the wet ran across the floor. There were no people either here or in the adjoining room; only a cradle stood there, in which was a child. The ferry-boat came back with only one person in it: whether that person was a man or a woman was not an easy matter to determine. The person in question was wrapped in a great cloak, and wore a kind of hood. Presently the boat lay to.

It was a woman who got out of it and came into the room. She looked very stately when she straightened her back; two proud eyes looked forth from beneath her black eyebrows. It was Mother Sören, the ferry-wife: the crows and daws might have called out another name for her, which we know better.

She looked morose and did not seem to care to talk; but this much was settled, that the student should board in her house for an indefinite time, while things looked so bad in Copenhagen.

This or that honest citizen would often come to the ferry-house from the neighbouring little town. There came Frank the cutler, and Sivert the exciseman. They drank a jug of beer in the ferry-house, and used to converse with the student; for he was a clever young man who knew his "Practica," as they called it; he could read Greek and Latin, and was well up in learned subjects.

"The less one knows, the less it presses upon one," said Mother Sören.

"You have to work hard," said Holberg one day, when she was

dipping clothes in the strong soapy water, and was obliged herself to split the logs for the fire.

"That 's my affair," she replied.

"Have you been obliged to toil in this way from your childhood?"

"You can read that from my hands," she replied, and held out her hands, that were small indeed, but hard and strong, with bitten nails. "You are learned, and can read."

At Christmas-time it began to snow heavily. The cold came on, the wind blew sharp as if there were vitriol in it to wash the people's faces. Mother Sören did not let that disturb her; she threw her cloak around her, and drew her hood over her head. Early in the afternoon—it was already dark in the house—she laid wood and turf on the hearth, and then sat down to darn her stockings, for there was no one to do it for her. Towards evening she spoke more words to the student than it was customary with her to use; she spoke of her husband.

"He killed a sailor of Dragör by mischance, and for that he has to work for three years in irons. He 's only a common sailor, and therefore the law must take its course."

"The law is there for people of high rank too," said Holberg.

"Do you think so?" said Mother Sören; then she looked into the fire for a while; but after a time she began to speak again. "Have you heard of Kai Lykke, who caused a church to be pulled down, and when the clergyman, Master Martin, thundered from the pulpit about it, he had him put in irons, and sat in judgment upon him, and condemned him to death? Yes, and the clergyman was obliged to bow his head to the stroke. And yet Kai Lykke went scot-free."

"He had a right to do as he did in those times," said Holberg, "but now we have left those times behind us."

"You may get a fool to believe that," cried Mother Sören; and she got up and went into the room where the little child lay. She lifted up the child and laid it down more comfortably. Then she arranged the bed-place of the student: he had the great coverlet, for he felt the cold more than she did, though he had been born in Norway.

On New Year's morning it was a bright sunshiny day. The frost had been so strong, and was still so strong, that the fallen snow had become a hard mass, and one could walk upon it. The bells of the little town were tolling for church. Student Holberg wrapped himself up in his woollen cloak, and wanted to go to the town.

Over the ferry-house the crows and daws were flying with loud cries; one could hardly hear the church bells for their screaming. Mother Sören stood in front of the house, filling a brass pot with snow, which

she was going to put on the fire to get drinking water. She looked up to the crowd of birds, and thought her own thoughts.

Student Holberg went to church; on his way there, and on his return, he passed by the house of tax-collecter Sivert by the town-gate. Here he was invited to take a mug of brown beer with treacle and sugar. The discourse fell upon Mother Sören, but the tax-collector did not know much about her, and, indeed, few knew much about her. She did not

MOTHER SOREN.

belong to the island of Falster, he said; she had had a little property of her own at one time. Her man was a common sailor, a fellow of a very hot temper, and had killed a sailor of Dragör; and he beat his wife, and yet she defended him.

"I should not endure such treatment," said the tax-collector's wife. "I am come of more respectable people: my father was stocking-weaver to the Court."

"And consequently you have married a Government official," said Holberg, and made a bow to her and to the collector.

It was on Twelfth Night, the evening of the festival of the Three Kings, Mother Sören lit up for Holberg a three-king candle, that is, a tallow candle with three wicks, which she had herself prepared.

"A light for each man," said Holberg.

"For each man?" repeated the woman, and looked sharply at him.

"For each of the wise men from the East," said Holberg.

"You mean it that way," said she, and then she was silent for a long time. But on this evening he learned more about her than he had yet known.

"You speak very affectionately of your husband," observed Holberg, "and yet the people say that he ill-uses you every day."

"That 's no one's business but mine," she replied. "The blows might have done me good when I was a child; now, I suppose, I get them for my sins. But I know what good he has done me," and she rose up. "When I lay sick upon the desolate heath, and no one would have pity on me, and no one would have anything to do with me, except the crows and daws, which came to peck me to bits, he carried me in his arms, and had to bear hard words because of the burden he brought on board ship. It 's not in my nature to be sick, and so I got well. Every man has his own way, and Sören has his; but the horse must not be judged by the halter. Taking one thing with another, I have lived more agreeably with him than with the man whom they called the most noble and gallant of the King's subjects. I have had the Stadtholder Gyldenlöwe, the King's half-brother, for my husband; and afterwards I took Palle Dyre. One is as good as another, each in his own way, and I in mine. That was a long gossip, but now you know all about me."

And with these words she left the room.

It was Marie Grubbe! so strangely had fate played with her. She did not live to see many anniversaries of the festival of the Three Kings; Holberg has recorded that she died in June, 1716; but he has not written down, for he did not know, that a number of great black birds circled over the ferry-house, when Mother Sören, as she was called, was lying there a corpse. They did not scream, as if they knew that at a burial silence should be observed. So soon as she lay in the earth, the birds disappeared; but on the same evening in Jutland, at the old manor house, an enormous number of crows and choughs were seen; they all cried as loud as they could, as if they had some announcement to make: perhaps they talked of him who, as a little boy, had taken away their eggs and their young; of the peasant's son, who had to wear an iron garter, and of the noble young lady, who ended by being a ferry-man's wife.

"Brave! brave!" they cried.

And the whole family cried, "Brave! brave!" when the old house was pulled down.

"They are still crying, and yet there 's nothing to cry about," said the clerk, when he told the story. "The family is extinct, the house has

been pulled down, and where it stood is now the stately poultry-house, with gilded weathercocks, and the old Poultry Meg. She rejoices greatly in her beautiful dwelling. If she had not come here," the old clerk added, "she would have had to go into the workhouse."

The pigeons cooed over her, the turkey-cocks gobbled, and the ducks quacked.

"Nobody knew her," they said; "she belongs to no family. It 's pure charity that she is here at all. She has neither a drake father nor a hen mother, and has no descendants."

She came of a great family, for all that; but she did not know it, and the old clerk did not know it, though he had so much written down; but one of the old crows knew about it, and told about it. She had heard from her own mother and grandmother about Poultry Meg's mother and grandmother. And we know the grandmother too: we saw her ride, as a child, over the bridge, looking proudly around her, as if the whole world belonged to her, and all the birds' nests in it; and we saw her on the heath, by the sand-dunes; and, last of all, in the ferry-house. The granddaughter, the last of her race, had come back to the old home, where the old castle had stood, where the black wild birds were screaming; but she sat among the tame birds, and these knew her and were fond of her. Poultry Meg had nothing left to wish for; she looked forward with pleasure to her death, and she was old enough to die.

"Grave! grave!" cried the crows.

And Poultry Meg had a good grave, which nobody knew except the old crow, if the old crow is not dead already.

And now we know the story of the old manor house, of its old proprietors, and of all Poultry Meg's family.

THE END.

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